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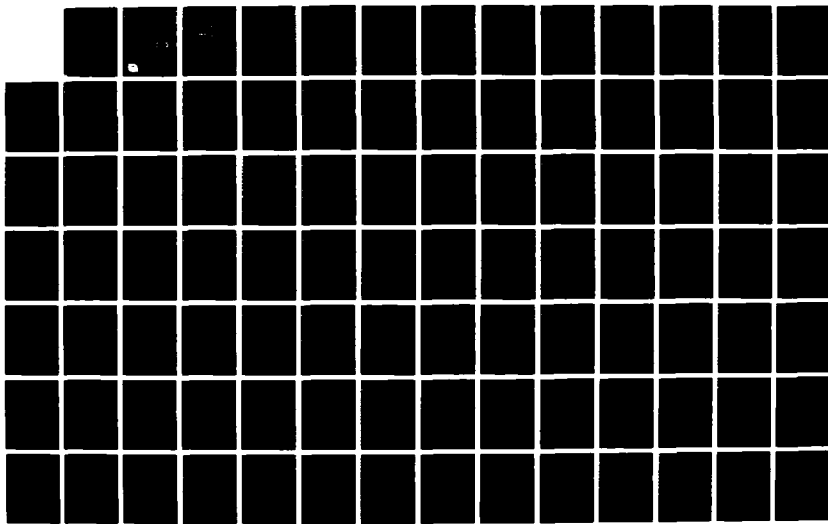
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## REALISTIC PLANNING SCENARIOS

Barry M. Blechman  
Marc E. Smyrl  
Victor A. Utgoff

July 1987

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*Prepared for*  
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## REALISTIC PLANNING SCENARIOS

Barry M. Blechman  
Marc E. Smyrl  
Victor A. Utgoff

July 1987



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSIS

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Task T-K6-338

## PREFACE

This study was prepared during FY 1986-1987 by the Institute for Defense Analyses in response to Task Order T-K6-338, dated 1 July 1985, Contract MDA 903 84 C 0031, for the Office of the Director, Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense. Its purpose was to develop a variety of long-term scenarios leading to conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union which could be used for defense planning purposes.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How might the United States and the Soviet Union actually come to war? Even though U.S. security planning aims primarily to meet the Soviet military threat, the answer to this question is far from obvious. Participation in conflict is never automatic or obligatory; it is the result of conscious political decisions taken over an extended period of time. Moreover, the potential cost of a major war between the two great powers is so great that each has long assumed a relatively cautious stance when dealing with the other directly. Although the U.S.S.R. has tended to act more aggressively as its military power has increased relative to that of the United States, the experience of the past forty years demonstrates that local conflicts--even those, such as the Korean War, which involve substantial numbers of forces of the great powers--need not spread automatically.

This study examines the changes in international relations and in the behavior of the great powers that would be required to move the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. from their present stance of competition short of war to one of direct military conflict. In doing this, it in no way attempts to predict the future, or even to present a hypothetical "most plausible" scenario. Rather, the study isolates those key variables that will determine the evolution of the international environment and suggests various internally consistent patterns into which these variables might develop. In this way, a number of plausible "alternative futures" leading to U.S./Soviet war are constructed.

The exercise is intended to serve two fundamental purposes. It provides "scripts" for military and political simulations representing a number of plausible but contrasting future strategic environments. Each script presents problems for U.S. military planners that diverge significantly from currently used planning scenarios. These novel situations could be used to evaluate force structures, to test military strategies, and to help develop techniques for managing political/military crises in such a way as to maximize the achievement of U.S. objectives without running undue risks of military conflict. In addition, in the course of defining and describing the scenarios, the study also illustrates a number of outstanding, but often neglected, issues and problems of interest to U.S. political and security planners.

## FLASHPOINTS FOR U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT

In light of the historical record of U.S.-Soviet relations, it seems likely that conflict between the two nations, if it should occur, would most likely be triggered by conflicts or confrontations involving third countries. Accordingly, the initial section of this report identifies potential flashpoints for U.S.-Soviet conflict in various regions of the world. The twenty most plausible of these are summarized in Table ES-1, below.

Table ES-1. Regional Conflict Flashpoints

<b>Northeast Asia</b>	<b>Africa</b>
1. North Korean attack on South Korea	12. Conflict in northern Africa
2. Soviet-backed North Korean attack	13. Involvement in Angola
<b>Southeast Asia</b>	14. Conflict in South Africa
3. Vietnamese attack on Thailand	<b>Southern Europe</b>
4. Sino/Soviet confrontation	15. Insurgencies in Yugoslavia
<b>South Asia</b>	16. Disintegration of Yugoslavia
5. Extension of the Afghan War	<b>Central Europe</b>
6. Disintegration of Pakistan	17. Problems in Poland
<b>Southwest Asia</b>	18. Conflict in Germany
7. Struggle for Iran	<b>Northern Europe</b>
8. Secession in northern Iran	19. Conflict in northern Europe
9. Extension of the Iran/Iraq conflict	<b>Central America</b>
<b>Middle East</b>	20. Escalation in Central America
10. Israeli success in a new Middle East war	
11. Syrian success in a new Middle East war	

The list includes events with widely different degrees of near-term plausibility. Certain crises, especially those involving Iran, Afghanistan, and the Arab-Israeli conflict are quite plausible in the near term, given the structure of the current international situation in South and Southwest Asia. The proximity of several distinct but interrelated flashpoints in these two regions provides an additional degree of explosiveness to potential crises. Conversely, conflict involving the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. in Southeast Asia or southern Africa would become plausible only following major changes in international politics requiring a significant passage of time. Other flashpoints lie between these two extremes.

The flashpoints also differ in their likely outcome. A crisis in Korea, Europe, or the Middle East could lead directly to fighting between U.S. and Soviet units; combined with its high degree of near-term plausibility, this makes the Middle East the most

dangerous single region in terms of potential great power conflict. Other flashpoints would be more likely to result in low-intensity fighting or isolated incidents involving the two powers, or perhaps only in new deployments of military forces by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

Considered in the context of the ongoing U.S.-Soviet struggle for global power and influence, the various flashpoints can be organized into conceptually useful categories. Certain potential incidents, such as great power involvement in low-intensity conflicts in Central America, southern Africa, or South Asia, can be understood as part of the ongoing efforts of each power to improve its international position at the other's expense and, assuming that they took place in isolation, would be unlikely to lead to any serious risks of escalation. Other, more dangerous, crises might be triggered by the collapse of local authority in key countries such as Iran or Yugoslavia, by great power interventions in local conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, or by deliberate attacks by the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. against each other's armed forces--perhaps in retaliation for an action by the opposing power in another part of the world.

One of the central conclusions of this study, however, is that no single crisis, occurring in isolation, is likely to trigger a major U.S.-Soviet war. One of a number of potential developments would have to take place coincident with or subsequent to the initial crisis for the probability of war to rise significantly.

International or regional developments which, while not involving armed conflict directly, could have a significant impact on the likelihood of conflict in particular regions. In the critical South and Southwest Asian regions, for example, the political evolution of key countries--Iran, Pakistan, and India--as well as the actions of certain sub-national groups--especially the Kurds and the Sihks--could impact not only regional stability, but also the goals and perceived options of the great powers.

Political developments within the major alliances will also play a key role in defining the likelihood of great power conflict in any future international environment. Accelerated rearmament and greater foreign policy independence on the part of Japan, or the advent of a neutralist government in West Germany, for example, would have implications far beyond the borders of those two countries. Likewise, developments in Eastern Europe could play a key, albeit indirect, role in determining Soviet freedom of action in the rest of the world. Given the importance of economic conditions in determining political climates and events, it is clear that the evolution of global and regional



economies will also help to determine potential shifts in political relationships, particularly as concerns U.S. and Soviet allies.

Actual outbreaks of international violence, finally, even if initially contained, would also influence subsequent events. Most obviously, tangible political or military factors can be identified that would link events in one or more regions. These factors include short-term considerations, such as the so-called "spill-over" of hostilities into previously unaffected regions as one side or the other seeks tactical advantage by extending the area of battle. Such a broadening of conflict also could take place in response to strategic considerations, as one or the other of the great powers sought to create problems for its opponent in additional parts of the world, thus tying down military assets.

Linkages also could exist in a chronological sense; the fact of prior conflict could have an impact on subsequent great power behavior, just as the fact of 40 years of U.S./Soviet post-war competition without direct conflict has had an impact on the current expectations and behavior of the two powers. As incident followed incident, policy makers in the United States and the Soviet Union could begin to perceive their future options in new light. Certain thresholds might have been broken: The first actual combat between U.S. and Soviet units, for example, or the first use of nuclear weapons, perhaps by a nation other than the U.S. or U.S.S.R. Once a threshold had been crossed, subsequent incidents involving comparable, or even more escalatory actions would become more likely. Moreover, pressures on decision makers from domestic constituencies for more assertive policies--from public opinion and Congress in the United States, and from competitive factions among the Soviet elites--could increase in the wake of international incidents which were perceived as defeats. More tangible pressures on decision makers could also grow if incidents begin to place increasing demands on military forces and logistical facilities. Policy makers could begin to see themselves faced with growing constraints and perceive a compelling need to act boldly and decisively before eroding resources made action impossible.

## GLOBAL PLANNING SCENARIOS

Part Two of this report details seven comprehensive planning scenarios. Each describes the evolution of international affairs and U.S.-Soviet relations from 1987 through the outbreak of a general war. In the scenarios, particular attention is given to describing the evolution of decision-making in Moscow and Washington. Military operations involving the use of great powers' military forces or those of their allies are described in

detail as well. Each scenario ends with a summary of the military situation facing U.S. planners. It also would be possible to game the scenarios prior to the point specified in the report.

### **Alpha**

The first scenario describes how a major U.S./Soviet conflict could develop in 1995, following a period of relative Soviet weakness vis-a-vis the United States. The international environment projected for this scenario represents a straight-line extrapolation of current trends. This projection of the international environment, however, should not be considered a forecast of the most likely international developments; it is only one possible end-point of the current train of events. It is significant, however, that even within an international environment similar to that existing today, it is feasible to imagine the development of a major U.S./Soviet military conflict within ten years. The scenario is summarized below.

Following a number of minor set-backs, the U.S.S.R. attempts to regain the international initiative in the winter of 1991 by escalating its involvement in Central America. The U.S. responds with commando attacks on newly-established Soviet facilities inside Nicaragua, forcing the U.S.S.R. to withdraw its forces from that nation. This set-back leads the Soviet government to support a Syrian offensive against Israel, in hope of reversing the trend toward U.S. gains in the Middle East. When the Syrian attack is defeated in the Spring of 1992, however, both great powers end up with ground and tactical air units deployed in the region, along with beefed-up naval forces in the Mediterranean. Incidents between U.S. and Soviet maritime forces follow.

Over the course of 1993, various Soviet actions in the Middle East, born increasingly of desperation, antagonize both Iraq and Turkey, resulting eventually in denial of the airspace of both countries, as well as the Turkish Straits, to Soviet military cargoes. Seeking means of supporting its forces in the Middle East, in 1994 the U.S.S.R. gains increased access to Yugoslav ports and other facilities in return for security assistance and advisors to support the Yugoslav government's efforts to control growing dissident movements in Slovenia and Croatia. The Soviet intervention, however, leads only to the further destabilization of Yugoslavia and, eventually, to open civil war. Over a 12-month period, Soviet and NATO forces are drawn increasingly into the Yugoslav civil war and, by June 1995, there are frequent air and sea incidents, as well as exchanges of fire between their ground forces. The escalating conflict in Yugoslavia then leads to mobilization on the

European central front, and eventually to a "preemptive" attack by Soviet forces in Germany.

### **Beta**

Scenario Beta also leads to war in 1995. In this case, however, the conflict follows a period of U.S. weakness.

The initial flashpoints in Scenario Beta are located in South and Southwest Asia. After Soviet interventions in Iraq and Pakistan, which draw little in the way of effective U.S. retribution, both great powers become embroiled with the multiple factions contending for supremacy in post-Khomeini Iran. Great power commitments in Iran lead to the deployment of U.S. and Soviet troops in that country and isolated armed clashes between them, as well as to related confrontations in Pakistan and the Arabian Peninsula, which, in turn, lead to new U.S. military commitments. The situation reaches a crisis point when North Korea and Syria, acting independently of each other and without the active support of the Soviet Union, choose to capitalize on what they perceive to be a U.S. overextension in Iran and the Indian Ocean, as well as on favorable local conditions, to strike at South Korea and Israel, respectively.

The U.S. decision to support its allies while maintaining the newly-established positions in the Indian Ocean, together with the ongoing necessity of maintaining a strong presence in Europe, leads the United States to carry out a series of major air and naval actions, culminating with a limited nuclear strike on North Korean forces. The Soviet Union challenges these U.S. actions, which seem to the U.S.S.R.'s leaders to be threatening Soviet strategic assets, by sinking a U.S. aircraft carrier in the Sea of Japan. Widespread air and naval conflict follows, including attacks by both powers on naval facilities inside each other's territory.

### **Gamma**

In this scenario, we postulate the emergence of a widening political and economic gap between the United States and its European allies, as well as decreasing political cohesion among the nations of Western Europe. In a parallel development, increasing tension develops between the Soviet Union and the countries of the Warsaw Pact. While these developments lead the Soviet Union to concentrate increasingly on European matters, in an effort to bring its allies into line and to woo the increasingly independent West Europeans, the United States responds initially by shifting its attention to East Asian and

Third World interests. A deteriorating situation, however, forces the U.S. again to pay attention to European developments and, eventually, it is drawn into conflict there in the year 2000.

After a period of increasingly radical left-wing rule in several European nations from 1990 to 1997, during which U.S. forces are withdrawn from Europe, political power in the Federal Republic of Germany is assumed by a coalition of the right and the far right. The new German government repudiates ties with the West, withdraws West German troops from the already weakened NATO, and openly seeks the reunification of Germany and its restoration to great power status. Conditions in East Germany also continue to deteriorate, as increasing repression fuels popular dissent. In the early months of the year 2000, the mutiny of a unit of the East German army sparks a general revolt; soon thereafter, an international confrontation breaks out as West German units move to assist the East German rebels.

Meanwhile, concern for developments in Germany, as well as in Eastern Europe, has led to an improvement in relations between the U.S. and other nations of Western Europe after 1998, and to a renewed U.S. commitment to the defense of Europe. At the same time, the United States has continued its policy of aiding forces opposing Soviet-backed regimes in the third world. Eventually, Soviet leaders become convinced that, in order to defeat the growing threat of West German revanchism, it is necessary to take preemptive actions against the U.S. forces which are being rebuilt in Europe. The East German crisis, thus, triggers a Soviet nuclear strike against West European military facilities. When the U.S. retaliates with nuclear weapons against Soviet naval bases in the Arctic and the Far East, both powers are committed to war.

#### **Delta**

In this scenario we examine the possibilities of U.S./Soviet conflict in the year 2000 arising from major changes in the policies and international alignments of the major regional powers of East Asia. The scenario postulates that Japan chooses to break its security relationship with the United States in the mid-1990s, and develops advanced military capabilities--including nuclear weapons. In a related action, a change of government in the People's Republic of China causes Beijing to move toward closer ties with the Soviet Union.

Following a series of setbacks in the early 1990s, the U.S. assumes a relatively passive role in world affairs in the years 1992-96, concentrating instead on domestic

problems. The principal international developments of this period include a series of conflicts in South and Southwest Asia--a brief but bloody Indo-Pakistani war in 1993, subsequent internal conflicts in Pakistan, leading to the growth of separatist pressures in Baluchistan, and serious internal divisions and conflicts in Iran following the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini. The latter weakens the Tehran government to the point that a pro-Soviet Kurdish faction is able to take control of northwestern Iran and proclaim an independent Kurdish state.

During this time, anti-American nationalist forces in Japan succeed in bringing about a radical shift in Japanese policy, breaking security ties with the United States and initiating a major build-up of Japan's military forces. In Taiwan, by contrast, the rise of forces dedicated to the independence of Taiwan as a country separate from China, serves to strengthen that country's ties to the U.S.

In the years following 1996, a more aggressive U.S. administration seeks to reverse growing Soviet influence in the Far East and Southwest Asia. In addition to supporting Taiwan against threats from Beijing, the U.S. takes a more active part in opposing Soviet-backed separatist movements in Baluchistan and Kurdistan. As its position deteriorates in Southwest Asia, the Soviet Union seeks to exploit the new strategic environment in the Far East to force the U.S. to reduce its military pressure in Iran and Pakistan; Moscow encourages attacks by Chinese and North Korean forces on South Korea.

Rather than reducing its effort in Southwest Asia, however, the U.S. employs nuclear weapons to maintain its position in Korea. The U.S.S.R. responds by launching nuclear strikes on U.S. forces in South Korea, while the Chinese attack U.S. naval forces in the Far East. In this way, the two great powers find themselves prosecuting simultaneous major conflicts in Southwest Asia and the Far East, as well as a general naval war.

### **Epsilon**

This scenario examines the possibility of a U.S.-Soviet war taking place in the first decade of the twenty-first century. At that time, the United States, which has followed an isolationist course for much of the preceding decade, concentrating its military resources on the development and deployment of an extensive strategic defense system. During the period of American isolation, independent power centers develop in Western Europe and,

most particularly, in East Asia where a Sino-Japanese alliance becomes the U.S.S.R.'s principal rival for global dominance.

Gradually returning to a more active international posture after the year 2000, the U.S. is drawn into a building conflict between the Soviet Union and the nations of East Asia. While American conventional forces have been allowed to deteriorate in the intervening period, the U.S. possesses strong offensive and defensive strategic nuclear forces. War, in these circumstances, is precipitated by a Soviet decision to carry out a preemptive attack on U.S. space-based strategic defense systems in conjunction with a conventional attack against China.

#### **Zeta**

This scenario illustrates one possibility for U.S./Soviet conflict that might arise from the gradual erosion of Soviet control of its East European empire and internal upheavals within the U.S.S.R. The primary dynamic within the scenario results from the intensification and prolonged continuance of two trends evident in the 1980s: i) a gradual decline in Soviet economic performance relative to other industrialized nations and even portions of the third world; and ii) a reassertion of U.S. military prowess and political leadership on a global basis, backed by its advanced technology and great economic leverage.

As these fundamental trends continue from the 1980s into the 1990s, the Soviets slowly lose position and influence in the third world, a process capped by a successful revolution in Cuba which overthrows the Communist government there in the late 1990s, effectively terminating any Soviet influence in both the Western Hemisphere and southern Africa. The inability of the U.S.S.R.'s leadership to cope with these events hastens their political demise, inaugurating a period of internal instability at the beginning of the new century. During this period, longstanding problems in Eastern Europe intensify and spread to non-Russian portions of the U.S.S.R. itself. Finally, an open struggle for control of the military apparatus of the Soviet state in 2005, triggered by large-scale revolts in Eastern Europe, provides both opportunity and danger for the West.

#### **Omega**

In this scenario, we explore a different possibility of a major U.S.-Soviet war in the year 2005. After more than a decade of intensifying confrontation, the two powers become involved in a major conflict when the Soviets move to seize the Arabian Peninsula. The

naval and air conflict which ensues quickly spreads to East Asia, and leads eventually to a major land war in Manchuria and Korea.

The last fifteen years of the 20th Century are marked by serious unrest in key third world countries, with Mexico and Egypt hardest hit. In the former, an economic collapse leads to civil war in the years 1998-2001; attempts to contain this problem effectively monopolize U.S. foreign policy during this period. In Egypt, torn by strife between Islamic fundamentalists and pro-Soviet leftist forces, a strongly anti-American government comes to power in 1995, precipitating a chain of events which, by 2005, leaves the entire Middle East in danger of Soviet occupation.

The scenario further postulates that the United States is effectively on its own in seeking to deal with these problems throughout the 1990s. The industrialized nations of Western Europe and East Asia distance themselves from successive American administrations, seeking to maintain their domestic tranquility and prosperity by reducing military expenditures and developing cooperative economic ties and political relations with the Soviet Union. The break between the U.S. and Western Europe is assumed to be permanent, with the dissolution of NATO postulated to take place in 1999. In the first years of the new century, however, renewed cooperation with the nations of Northeast Asia provides new strategic opportunities for the United States, as well as an increased danger of U.S.-Soviet confrontation.

## **KEY PLANNING ISSUES**

In each of the seven scenarios, it is possible to identify a number of key events which propel the international situation away from the conditions we have come to regard as normal, and towards one in which war between the great powers is possible.

If these scenarios are used in political planning and simulation exercises, these "escalatory incidents" are especially useful as points of focus. Since they represent important decisions or turning points, they can be analyzed with an eye to determining how such a crisis might be avoided or defused in the real world. In this context, the "solutions" postulated in the scenarios--all of which, by definition, lead directly or indirectly to a major U.S./Soviet war--might well be considered less than optimal.

Since the purpose of this study is to provide frameworks for the analysis of wide-ranging strategic and military questions, the scenarios are also designed to illustrate significantly different patterns of escalation. In general, the escalatory patterns of the

scenarios comprise two basic types. Scenarios Alpha, Gamma, Epsilon, and Zeta can be thought of as "linear" in form. They represent situations in which a crisis focused on one region or event escalates through a number of steps until it becomes a major conflict between the great powers. Scenarios Beta, Delta, and Omega, on the other hand, are more "cumulative" in form. In these latter scenarios, the eventual conflict is brought about by the combined impact of two or more initially unrelated and geographically distant crises. The distinction between these two types of escalatory environments is significant for military planners, because of the different types of short-term decisions which they are likely to engender prior to the conflict and, accordingly, the differing military problems which might be expected when a building political crisis erupts into armed conflict.

A common factor in the linear scenarios is that all the parties have a considerable amount of time to prepare for the coming conflict in a given geographical area, although they do not always take advantage of the opportunities provided by the warning signs. So far as Western forces are concerned, Scenarios Alpha and Zeta present situations which are preceded by considerable periods of political, military, and industrial mobilization, with the result that the forces of the U.S. and its allies are at or near their full potential strength, and war industries are well developed by the outbreak of war. Scenarios Gamma and Epsilon, in contrast, present situations in which U.S. forces are unable to reach their potential maximum strength.

The fact that conflict in these scenarios is focused on a precise geographical location also has definite implications for the type of military forces most directly involved in the initial stages of conflict. The principal burden of operations is placed on the land and tactical air forces of the two sides; naval operations play a secondary role. Finally, since the outbreak of war in these scenarios is usually preceded by a prolonged build-up of both sides' forces in relative proximity to each other, the potential for inadvertent conflict resulting from local accidents, errors by tactical commanders, or momentary misperceptions of the other side's intentions is considerable. Scenario Alpha, in particular, illustrates this potential problem.

The more fluid nature of the Beta, Delta, and Omega scenarios places very different demands on U.S. military forces and planning structures than do the situations considered previously. Since the potential locations of the major U.S./Soviet conflict are either multiple or indeterminate, a premium is placed on such highly mobile forces as naval and strategic air units. Scenarios Beta and Omega lead explicitly to naval wars, and such a conclusion is also one likely outcome of Scenario Delta.



The Beta and Delta scenarios do not necessarily assume a protracted period of military and industrial mobilization prior to the outbreak of U.S./Soviet conflict. While the forces of both powers are engaged in various local and regional conflicts over the period described by the scenario, the situations lack the considerable potential for political mobilization which existed in the more "linear" scenarios. Accordingly, while the standing forces of both powers are expected to be mobilized prior to the outbreak of war, they would not be significantly expanded or enhanced. On the whole, the conflict situations would have to be faced with the forces at hand. Scenario Omega is a partial exception to this rule, as it postulates a limited mobilization--expansion of rapid deployment forces and build-up in Northeast Asia--prior to the outbreak of hostilities.

In addition to providing general examples of escalatory sequences, the seven global scenarios highlight a number of specific issues for U.S. security planning.

Political intelligence issues which arise in several of the scenarios include the evolution of Chinese and Japanese foreign policies and possible emergence of internal conflicts in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, as well as the possible ramifications of ethnic and religious differences in South and Southwest Asia. Although these potential developments are largely outside the control of U.S. decision makers, analyzing and forecasting them is of obvious importance for the United States. The hypothetical situations described in the scenarios illustrate a few of the more plausible options; other possible options also could be explored by changing one or more parameters of a given scenario.

How the United States should react to future international events and conditions is a question for political policy planning. The global scenarios illustrate a number of potential problems for which alternative solutions could be explored. How should the U.S. react to political shifts in Europe or the Far East? What role should it play in internal conflicts in Iran, Yugoslavia, or South Africa? How might NATO intervene in an East European crisis? Would it be possible to carry out industrial and military mobilization without triggering a premature conflict?

The hypothetical conflict situations outlined in the scenarios also illustrate a variety of tactical and logistical problems which might potentially be faced by U.S. forces. How could U.S. forces sustain an expanded military presence in the Mediterranean or long-term low intensity conflict in Southwest Asia? Would it be possible to meet simultaneous contingencies in Korea and the Middle East? Could operations in Europe or East Asia be

conducted without access to West Germany or Japan, respectively? How would the deployment of partial or general strategic defenses affect the the military capabilities and options of the great powers? How might potential long-term force-structure decisions affect the ability of the United States to respond to unanticipated contingencies? The political contexts outlined in the scenarios provide frameworks in which these and other technical questions can be explored by means of simulations or planning exercises.

In general, the global scenarios provide a context in which these and other planning questions can be examined and alternative solutions compared. In those instances in which the scenarios postulate a particular solution, this is done chiefly to advance the narrative. It is intended that readers also will explore other possible courses of action and analyze their implications for the development of the scenario in question. This study provides a number of realistic contexts in which these questions can be considered and alternative answers evaluated.

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## INTRODUCTION

The pervasiveness and longevity of their struggle notwithstanding, the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union tends to be more rhetorical and indirect than tangible or historical; its sources are found more in abstract geopolitical concepts and in the clash of value systems than in any compelling history of conflict between the two countries. U.S. and Soviet troops have fought only once, during the Western intervention in the wake of the Russian Revolution more than sixty years ago. Although each side has suffered casualties in covert operations and isolated incidents involving ships and aircraft, and in military conflicts with nations or groups supported by the other, the two great powers have tended since the Second World War to be relatively circumspect in situations involving a risk of combat between their military units. Their one common border, on the Bering Sea, might serve as a model for cooperative arrangements to prevent boundary disputes between countries from developing into violence; the 1972 Incidents at Sea Agreement appears to have dealt effectively with what had been the one continuing source of direct friction between the armed forces of the two sides.

The experience of the past forty years demonstrates that local conflicts--even those, such as the Korean War, which involve substantial numbers of the great powers' forces--do not spread automatically, but are more likely to be isolated. More generally, both powers have shown themselves to be entirely capable of resisting opportunities to go to war with each other. Participation in conflict is never automatic or obligatory; it is the result of conscious political decisions taken over an extended period of time.

This pattern suggests strongly that a major U.S./Soviet war would be unlikely to emerge from only one isolated conflict somewhere in the world. More plausibly, a lengthy sequence of events over time would change the two sides' calculations of the relative risks and benefits of peace and war--as well as their assessments of the other side's proclivity to contemplate war seriously. The basic psychology of the two sides could begin to change; war would be transformed from an abstract possibility to a real option--a choice within the realm of possibility, if not for one side, then certainly for the other.

This study examines the changes that would be required to move the two powers from their present stance of competition short of war to one where direct conflict would be possible. In doing this, it in no way attempts to predict the future or even to present a hypothetical "most plausible" scenario. Rather, it attempts to isolate the key variables which would determine the evolution of the international environment, and to suggest various internally consistent patterns in which they might develop. In this way, a number of plausible "alternative futures" leading to U.S./Soviet war are constructed for use as planning scenarios. These scenarios can be used as the basis for political crisis simulation exercises, or provide a point of departure for policy analysis by suggesting alternative plausible ramifications of certain fundamental policy decisions.

Understanding these plausible sequences of events also has important implications for military planning. The types of wars which result from these scenarios could differ markedly from the canonical conflicts used currently for U.S. military planning. Rather than one large conventional conflict in a single location, for example, there might be several small but simultaneous wars in different parts of the globe, each involving U.S. and Soviet military units. In another possibility, rather than a major strategic exchange followed by a negotiated or de facto peace, intermittent use might be made of nuclear weapons in support of specific tactical or strategic objectives.

Since the character of any future war would likely depend on the international situation which spawned it, the various political scenarios constructed in this study allow us to describe several very different kinds of military situations which might follow logically from them. By defining seven different conflict situations, presenting contrasting objectives and requirements, it provides material for use in military planning exercises and wargaming. In addition, the development of the individual scenarios suggests a number of specific questions, of interest to military planners, which seem likely to bear heavily on the eventual outcome of the conflicts. These political, tactical, and logistical issues can be used as the focus of analysis for force structure and strategic planning.

*Structure of the Study.* When the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have appeared to be nearing warfare over the past 40 years, with only one exception, it always has been the result of their respective involvement on opposing sides of the local conflicts in various parts of the world: In Germany in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s; in the Middle East on several occasions; and in South Asia in the 1970s and 1980s. (The one exception, of course, was the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.) It seems reasonable, therefore, in considering how the United States and the Soviet Union might come to war, to begin by

examining those local conflicts around the world which might develop into an escalating crisis involving U.S. and Soviet military forces.

The identification and characterization of these flashpoints makes up the first section of this study. Chapter I examines fundamental questions of definition. Where would U.S.-Soviet crises be likely to occur? What form would they take? What would the likely short-term outcome of these situations be?

Flashpoints include dangerous local conflicts such as the Gulf War and potential Arab-Israeli conflicts, endemic low-intensity conflicts such as those in Central America and Kampuchea, and locations such as Iran, Pakistan, or Yugoslavia where future political developments could plausibly lead to the intervention of one or both great powers. Also included are the more obvious flashpoints which result from the deployment of forces from the two great powers in constant proximity to each other. These include Korea, Germany, and the key naval operations areas of the northern Atlantic Ocean. In all, twenty possible flashpoints are discussed in Chapter I. Each is summarized briefly and all are then ranked in terms both of plausibility and of potential for escalation.

In Chapter II, we describe a typology of flashpoints, analyzing how each would fit into the larger context of great power competition. What would U.S. and Soviet motives be for their initial involvement in particular situations? What factors would make a local crisis more likely to escalate into a general great power confrontation?

Certain incidents, such as great power involvement in low intensity conflicts in Central America, Angola, or South Asia, can be understood as part of the ongoing efforts of each power to improve its international position at the other's expense--and are unlikely to lead to serious risks of escalation if they take place in isolation. Other, more dangerous, crises might be triggered by the collapse of local authority in key countries such as Iran or Yugoslavia, by great power intervention in local conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, or by deliberate attacks by the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. against each other's forces--perhaps in retaliation for an action by the opposing power in another part of the world.

Since it is clear that conflict flashpoints cannot be understood fully if they are considered in isolation, Chapter III broadens the scope of our analysis by examining the impact of outside events on potential flashpoints. What regional or international developments would make identified potential crises more likely to occur? What are the inherent linkages between various potential crisis areas and situations?

Identifiable direct linkages among regions of the world and among local conflicts include logistical and geographical "constants" such as the requirement for the Soviet Union to have access through Southwest Asia or Southern Europe if it is to support military operations in the Middle East. Other linkages are more political and intangible; because China has interests in both Southeast and Northeast Asia, for example, events in the former could lead to conflicts in the latter. Moreover, it is possible to point to certain potential events which, while they would not involve armed conflict in the near term, would have a significant impact (either positive or negative) on the likelihood of future conflict. Events such as accelerated rearmament in Japan or a shift to a neutralist political stance by West Germany should be considered in this light.

Finally, Chapter III examines the effects of domestic conditions within the great powers themselves. What internal political or economic developments in the United States and the Soviet Union might make them more or less likely to engage in crisis-provoking behavior? How would an episode of political or military conflict affect subsequent U.S. and Soviet decision-making and international behavior?

The last of these is of particular importance. As incident followed incident, policy makers in the United States and the Soviet Union could begin to perceive their future options in a new light. Certain thresholds might have been broken: the first actual combat between U.S. and Soviet units, for example, or the first use of nuclear weapons, perhaps by a nation other than the U.S. or U.S.S.R. Once crossed, subsequent incidents would become far more likely. Moreover, pressures on decision makers from domestic constituencies for more assertive policies--from public opinion and Congress in the United States, and from competitive factions among the Soviet elite--could increase in the wake of international incidents which were perceived as defeats. More tangible pressures on decision makers could also grow if incidents begin to place increasing demands on military forces and logistical facilities. Policy makers could begin to see themselves faced with growing constraints and perceive a compelling need to act boldly and decisively before eroding resources make action impossible.

In Part Two, we use the data and analysis presented in Chapters I-III to construct seven alternative global scenarios. Each scenario describes the evolution of political and military decision-making in the United States and the Soviet Union. Particular attention is given to decisions which represent a step towards escalation of the great power conflict. Military operations involving the forces of the great powers or their allies are also detailed. The scenarios end with the onset of general war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

The events that would make up a sequence that led eventually to war would follow certain patterns more plausibly than others. Moreover, the plausibility of some events would depend to a degree on basic conditions of the international system; events which we can imagine occurring under some international conditions would be totally illogical under others. Accordingly, while this study is not principally an exercise in political or economic forecasting, the definition of plausible conflict scenarios includes descriptions of overall economic and political conditions. In all of the scenarios, nevertheless, our principal focus is on the impact of conflict itself on great power behavior, within parameters set by certain defined political-economic forecasts.

Conflict, in this sense, is defined as broadly as possible, to include situations which are chiefly political, in which no military actions are taken. Conflict between the great powers can involve purely political crises as well as fighting between their respective allies or between forces of one power and the allies of the other. The cumulative impact of events such as these on subsequent policy in Moscow and Washington would be critical. All of them, over time, might contribute to direct military confrontations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

The concluding chapter summarizes the central points of the seven global scenarios. The key escalatory steps of each scenario are identified and characterized. These can serve as a focus for political analysis of the scenarios and for their use in crisis simulation exercises. A second section sets out the principal political, logistical, and tactical problems illustrated in each scenario.

**PART ONE**

**FLASHPOINTS FOR U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT**

## PROLOGUE

As a first step in the study, a series of ten seminars on regional sources of U.S./Soviet military conflict were organized at the Institute for Defense Analyses over the course of the summer and autumn of 1985. The results of these seminars are described in separate papers, included as appendices to this report.

The ten seminars on potential regional conflict flashpoints covered:

Southeast Asia	Africa
Northeast Asia	Southern Europe
South Asia	Central Europe
Southwest Asia	Northern Europe
Middle East	Central America

A few regions were omitted from the study altogether, being considered extremely unlikely to be the theater of U.S./Soviet hostilities. The most important of these were South America and the Australia/Pacific region.

In each of the seminars, a small group of regional experts--from both the government and the private sector--were asked to address local situations and their potential for wider conflict. We sought especially to determine the sequences of events in that region which might lead plausibly to combat between U.S. and Soviet units. Potential conflict situations were then analyzed to determine certain key variables. A number of specific points were of particular interest.

- What would the necessary political and military prerequisites for conflict be in the various regions?
- How great would be the risk of military incidents or of sustained conflict between U.S. and Soviet units?
- What would be the most likely initial outcomes of such interactions?
- What form would the specific transitions from political confrontation to open war take?



- What linkages can be identified between conflicts in question and events in other regions?

The findings of these seminars constituted the direct basis for the flashpoints presented in Chapter I. In addition, the discussions of regional issues provided important analytic elements used to derive the theoretical framework presented in Chapters III and IV and ultimately to construct the global scenarios.

## I. SOURCES OF U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT

Overall, twenty plausible conflict flashpoints were identified in the initial phase of this study. Many more possible conflicts were defined, but eventually rejected as implausible. The plausible flashpoints, grouped by region, are listed in Table 1, below, and summarized in this chapter. The order in which the regional conflicts are described is purely arbitrary and does not imply any sort of ranking. The arrangement is geographical, beginning in Asia and moving westward.

**Table 1. Regional Conflict Flashpoints**

1. **Northeast Asia**
  - North Korean attack on South Korea
  - Soviet-backed North Korean attack
2. **Southeast Asia**
  - Vietnamese attack on Thailand
  - Sino/Soviet confrontation
3. **South Asia**
  - Extension of the Afghan war
  - Disintegration of Pakistan
4. **Southwest Asia**
  - Struggle for Iran
  - Secession in northern Iran
  - Extension of the Iran/Iraq Conflict
5. **Middle East**
  - Israeli success in a new Middle East war
  - Syrian success in a new Middle East war
6. **Africa**
  - Conflict in northern Africa
  - Involvement in Angola
  - Conflict in South Africa
7. **Southern Europe**
  - Insurgencies in Yugoslavia
  - Disintegration of Yugoslavia
8. **Central Europe**
  - Problems in Poland
  - Conflict in Germany
9. **Northern Europe**
  - Conflict in northern Europe
10. **Central America**
  - Escalation in Central America

*North Korean Attack of South Korea.* If relations between the United States and the Republic of Korea were to deteriorate to the point where the U.S. commitment to South

Korea's defense were seen to be in doubt, North Korea might perceive an opportunity to attack either in the belief that the U.S. would not intervene or that local conditions were such that North Korean forces could achieve a secure position before the U.S. intervention could take place. The North Korean decision would likely be taken independently; neither China nor the Soviet Union seems likely to encourage a new war in Korea in the foreseeable future. Such a scenario clearly would be more plausible if U.S. troops had been withdrawn from their present positions near the demilitarized zone. If the North Korean perceptions had been mistaken, and the U.S. did intervene and successfully pursued the war into the north, it is possible that clashes with Soviet forces might ensue. Unless the attack had prior Soviet support, however, it is more likely that both the United States and the Soviet Union would seek to bring the crisis to an end rather than risk a prolonged direct confrontation.

*Soviet-Backed North Korean Attack.* A North Korean offensive against South Korea also could take place in the context of a wider U.S./Soviet confrontation. If the United States and the Soviet Union were engaged in combat elsewhere in the world, the Soviets could attempt to divert U.S. resources by triggering a renewed conflict in Korea. In this case, of course, the presence of U.S. troops in South Korea would make the attack more, rather than less, likely.

*Vietnamese Attack on Thailand.* If Vietnam continues to encounter significant opposition from insurgent groups in Kampuchea, it is possible that Hanoi might choose at some point to deal with the problem by attacking deep into Thailand, both physically removing the insurgents' supplies and support camps, and, perhaps, compelling the Thai government to prohibit their future operation from Thai territory. In such a case, presuming that the United States had previously become involved in the conflict, as is now contemplated, it is conceivable that the U.S. might support Thailand either by intervening directly in the fighting or by putting military pressure on Vietnam itself in the form of demonstrative naval actions off its coast. If the conflict were not soon isolated, it might eventually lead to U.S. air strikes against Vietnamese targets, and--given Soviet support for Vietnam--the possibility of clashes between U.S. forces and Soviet units based in that country.

*Sino/Soviet Confrontation.* In the situation outlined above, it is also possible that the People's Republic of China, rather than the United States, would come to the aid of Thailand and the Khmer insurgents, either directly or by putting military pressure on Vietnam's northern border. It is also possible that China could become involved more

directly in Kampuchea by introducing irregular forces of its own to aid the rebels. If either of these actions threatened the Vietnamese position seriously, it could lead to Soviet threats against China. If relations between China and the United States had continued to improve, particularly in their security aspects, this might in turn lead to U.S. moves to aid China, including the movement of additional U.S. air units to Northeast Asia--perhaps to China itself. Aspects of this and the previous scenario could be combined in the case of a joint U.S./Chinese intervention in Southeast Asia; indeed, U.S. support of China in Northeast Asia would be more plausible in such a case. The risk of U.S./Soviet conflict in this case would probably remain low, but if the crisis were prolonged, eventually there might be some danger of incidents on the northern Chinese border or a re-ignition of the Korean conflict.

*Extension of the Afghan War.* A continued stalemate in Afghanistan or a significant increase in the success of the Mujaheddin could lead the Soviet Union to put military pressure on Pakistan in an effort to cut off the principal sources of supplies and support for the insurgent forces. Such actions could range from an increase in the frequency and scope of air strikes against Afghan rebel facilities within Pakistan to a major ground invasion into northern Pakistan intended to destroy forces and facilities and also to coerce the government of Pakistan into ending its support for the Afghan rebels. The long-standing enmity between India and Pakistan also might provide options to Soviet planners if they are clever. U.S. responses in any of these cases would probably be limited to providing weapons and logistical assistance to the Pakistani government. It is imaginable, however, under certain circumstances, that U.S. carrier-based aircraft might be employed in support of Pakistani forces or that the U.S. would send AWACS aircraft and advisors to enhance the Pakistani air defense system.

*Disintegration of Pakistan.* Over the longer term, it is possible that the Soviet Union might be in a position to exploit a consolidated position in Afghanistan by intervening directly in Pakistan. The growth of a serious separatist movement in Baluchistan could provide the means for such intervention. Indeed, the U.S.S.R. is said to have provided support to such movements in the past, and could be tempted to step up such efforts as part of a campaign to force the end of Pakistan's support for the Afghan insurgents.

If the integrity of Pakistan were threatened seriously by the creation of a Soviet-backed Baluchi state, the United States would be hard pressed not to intervene in some way. Initially, U.S. moves might be limited to technical help, advisors, special forces, and

the like. If Soviet forces were deployed to the secessionist area, however, the U.S. might intervene directly with air, naval, and even ground forces.

*Struggle for Iran.* Soviet intervention in Iran could follow a protracted breakdown in Iranian central authority if the U.S.S.R. perceived a realistic opportunity of securing a friendly government in Tehran. Alternatively, the Soviets might intervene to prevent what they perceived to be the imminent installation of a pro-Western regime. Assuming that there had been an initial period during which the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had provided covert support for contending factions, a Soviet decision to intervene would likely include a large-scale deployment of Soviet troops into the northern and central parts of the country. U.S. options in such an eventuality would vary.

If a Soviet-backed faction had succeeded rapidly in consolidating its position in Tehran, U.S. options might be limited to attempts to secure military positions in other countries on the Persian Gulf to contain the new extension of Soviet influence. In more fluid circumstances, however, the United States might find allies among anti-Soviet or secessionist elements in Khuzistan or Baluchistan and seek to establish competitive Iranian power centers through the provision of weapons and advice, the deployment of U.S. troops, or commitment of U.S. air power and special forces.

*Secession in Northern Iran.* An anti-Soviet government in Tehran faced with the secession of pro-Soviet elements in the Azeri or Kurdish regions of northern Iran would present more favorable opportunities for U.S. intervention. In such a case, U.S. air power and logistics could support the government's effort to regain control of these areas. It is unlikely that a significant deployment of U.S. ground forces would be considered in such a contingency.

*Extension of the Iran/Iraq Conflict.* An Iranian breakthrough in the war which threatened the Hussein government, or even the territorial integrity of Iraq, could lead to the deployment of Soviet troops in Iraq. While the U.S. would not directly oppose such a move, as it too would fear the consequences of such an extension of Iranian influence, it might seek (and be granted) opportunities to establish an offsetting military presence on the Gulf. This extension of great power confrontation would create a situation in which incidents would be possible. Over time, if U.S. and Soviet forces remained in the region, new flashpoints for subsequent U.S./Soviet crises would be created.

*Israeli Success in a New Middle East War.* Although any new Arab/Israeli war would almost certainly occur only as a result of a Syrian initiative, it is possible that Israel

could gain the upper hand rapidly, either as a result of a preemptive attack or of a highly successful border defense, go on the offensive, and soon be in a position to threaten the continued existence of the Syrian regime. In such a case, the Soviet Union might intervene directly in Syria's defense. Soviet airborne units could be introduced into Syria as a final warning against further Israeli advances, air strikes could be launched against Israeli targets by aircraft based in the Soviet Union or in Syria or other Arab nations, the Soviet Union could declare an air and sea blockade of Israel, or the Soviet Union could threaten to employ nuclear weapons against Israel. U.S. countermoves would be plausible if Soviet actions threatened the integrity of Israel, either in the short or long term. Overt nuclear threats or an intensive strategic or interdictory bombing campaign, or Soviet interference with U.S. operations in the region (as a result of a blockade, for example), all would be likely to trigger a U.S. response. The stakes involved in the situation for both sides would make conflict between U.S. and Soviet units likely, most probably in the form of air battles and naval battles.

*Syrian Success in a New Middle East War.* The roles of the great powers would be reversed if Israel were threatened seriously as a result of the Syrian attack. If Syria seized the Golan Heights and succeeded in defending them against the Israeli counter-attack, for example, Israel would be faced with the permanent loss of this tactical buffer zone, resulting in a serious degradation of its security position. In this case, the United States could consider assisting Israel directly in a campaign to retake the Heights. More plausibly, the U.S. might deploy forces to Israel to deter and, if necessary, defend against further Syrian aggression and to compel an acceptable peace settlement. The risk of direct U.S./Soviet conflict would be small in either case, since it is unlikely that the U.S.S.R. would participate directly in the Syrian offensive. The deployment of the two sides' forces in the region, however, could presage future incidents and a high risk of conflict over the longer term.

The risk of near-term conflict would be much higher if Syrian forces moved across Israel's pre-1967 borders, threatening the country's very existence. In this case, U.S. forces almost certainly would intervene; it is not clear that Soviet forces would become involved, however. It is also reasonable to assume that Israel would threaten to use, or actually employ, nuclear weapons in such an eventuality. If such a move seemed not to be supported by the United States, it is possible that it would result in a Soviet retaliation. The enormous risks involved in such a nuclear confrontation, however, are likely to act as a restraint on both great powers.

*Conflict in Northern Africa.* Facilities in one or more northern African countries--Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia--could be critical to U.S. military actions in the Middle East or South Asia. If a U.S./Soviet confrontation were underway in one of those regions, it is possible that the Soviet Union might seek to deny the U.S. use of African facilities by encouraging local forces to mount attacks on them. As Ethiopia is the most obvious source of such attacks, facilities in Sudan and Somalia might be at highest risk. It is also possible that a sudden U.S. military build-up in one of these countries might spark violent local opposition which could be exploited by the Soviets.

*Involvement in Angola.* It is possible that the United States will become involved progressively more openly in support of insurgent forces fighting the Soviet-supported government of Angola and thus risk direct or indirect conflict with Cuban or even Soviet units. The Angolan conflict would have to escalate a great deal for this to become a serious possibility, however, and in all likelihood only isolated incidents would result. A more serious development would be an attempt by either side to impose a blockade of Angola in an effort to prevent the movement of supplies from abroad. Such an action could lead to clashes between U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the South Atlantic, which conceivably could spread.

*Conflict in South Africa.* If, at some future point, the Republic of South Africa were partitioned into a number of smaller states, one dominated by the white population and the others ruled by various black groups, the preconditions for direct great power involvement in southern Africa could develop. For example, it is conceivable that the United States would have helped bring about such a settlement and then guaranteed the territorial integrity of the new states. Conceivably, attempts by disgruntled or opportunistic factions to revise the settlement would receive Soviet backing and, over time, result in the gradual involvement of the two great powers. This scenario could take place only over a long period of time, however.

*Insurgencies in Yugoslavia.* The tenuous quality of the internal consensus in post-Tito Yugoslavia suggests the possibility that the present federal system of government might prove unworkable. A lengthy period of internal unrest and increasing disturbances might lead eventually to the establishment of a regime dominated by Serbia and the armed forces. Opposition to such a regime would be especially strong in the northern regions of Croatia and Slovenia. At some point, particularly if the central government attempted to exploit the superior economies of the northern provinces or to suppress their individual ethnic characteristics, armed uprisings might erupt in those regions. Faced with such a

prospect, the government in Belgrade might find itself with no option but to turn to the Soviet Union for aid, requesting Soviet troops to put down the rebellion in the north. The insurgent forces might then appeal to the West for arms, equipment, and supplies. Training and sanctuary might be provided in Italy and Greece; supplies could be moved overland from these countries or from the sea. Eventually, the Soviets might pursue aggressive policies intended to disrupt the insurgent's logistics, and the stage would be set for a confrontation in Europe.

As in other cases mentioned previously, the high risks involved in this situation would in all likelihood lead both sides to behave cautiously. If Soviet efforts to interdict the flow of supplies to insurgent forces led to clashes with NATO units, however, and especially if such actions took place on NATO territory, the spread and escalation of the conflict could occur very quickly.

*Disintegration of Yugoslavia.* A more extreme case of the scenario given above would occur if one or more of Yugoslavia's constituent republics actually declared independence from Belgrade and sought Western support and protection. Once again, it is possible in such a case that the government in Belgrade would seek and receive Soviet military assistance in its efforts to reassert its authority. In this situation, however, effective Western intervention would require a more extensive commitment than covert support; the deployment of ground forces or air units would be required if any action were to be effective. The potential risks might well deter both sides from pursuing the conflict, leading them instead to some form of de facto partition of Yugoslavia. If the crisis were to continue, however, the danger of general war in Europe would be substantial. If nothing else, the tense situation in Yugoslavia would almost certainly lead to increased alert and readiness levels in Central Europe, which itself could be a source of incidents.

*Problems in Poland.* Anti-Soviet uprisings in Poland could lead to East-West conflict if confrontations between the Polish population and Soviet Army units led to massive refugee movements in the direction of the inter-German border and across the Baltic Sea. Soviet efforts to contain these movements could lead to clashes with NATO forces. Incidents might be particularly likely between NATO naval forces attempting to aid refugees (or Polish Navy deserters) or seeking to protect private West European citizens aiding the refugees, and Soviet, Polish, or East German air and naval forces seeking to interdict the refugees. It is imaginable, also, that the high levels of alert and readiness which might be reached by both sides as a result of a prolonged crisis in Eastern Europe



could lead to incidents on the border and eventually to the initiation of major conflict. This last possibility seems far fetched, however.

*Conflict in Germany.* While less likely than an uprising in Poland, major anti-Soviet unrest in East Germany might be plausible later in the century and would be considerably more dangerous. This is due both to the country's geographical location and to its unique links with West Germany. In addition to the potential for incidents resulting from refugees and mutual alerts, as in the Polish case, this special relationship could lead, in certain circumstances, to a West-German intervention on the intra-German border at a time when a general NATO action was not contemplated. Plausible developments in relations between the two Germanies, and between each of them and their respective allies, could make such a scenario more likely near the end of the century.

*Conflict in Northern Europe.* In a situation of high East-West tension, particularly if armed clashes had already taken place in other parts of the world, maritime forces of the great powers could clash in northern Europe and the surrounding maritime region. The likelihood of such incidents might be increased greatly if, in reaction to a perceived threat of war, the Soviet Union seized the Svalbard Archipelago, declared an exclusionary zone around its ballistic missile submarines in the Barents Sea, moved forces into Finland, or undertook a large-scale increase in the number and quality of its air assets on the Kola Peninsula. Alternatively, such NATO actions as the movement of ground forces or tactical air units to bases in northern Norway or the deployment of aircraft carriers into the Norwegian Sea, whether taken independently or in response to one or more of the Soviet actions listed above, could result in greatly heightened tensions and a risk of incidents. In the postulated atmosphere of extreme tension, such clashes could spread and lead to wider conflict even if hostilities were not underway elsewhere at the time. Particularly risky would be potential incidents involving Soviet strategic submarines and U.S. anti-submarine forces, and U.S. aircraft carriers and Soviet naval forces or land-based aircraft.

*Escalation in Central America.* A significant increase in Soviet or Soviet-backed activity in Central America or the Caribbean, such as the initiation of qualitatively different forms of support for insurgent movements in the region or even the ambiguous deployment of Soviet strategic forces in Cuba or Nicaragua, could lead to conflict, if the United States responded with direct attacks on facilities in Cuba or Nicaragua, or attacks on Soviet forces in this hemisphere. Given the military predominance of the United States in the region, however, as well as the history of great power understandings concerning legitimate forms

of military competition there, it is unlikely that incidents of U.S./Soviet violence in Central America and the Caribbean would result in wider or continuing hostilities.

## RELATIVE RISKS OF CONFLICT

The actual risk of U.S./Soviet conflict involved in each of the flashpoints summarized above depends on two fundamental variables: The relative probability of the original local crisis (its inherent plausibility) and the probable great power response to such a crisis should it occur.

*Inherent Plausibility.* Regarding the question of inherent plausibility, an initial examination of possible conflict flashpoints suggests a breakdown into four rough groups, from the most to the least likely. Flashpoints in the first group are considered entirely plausible in the context of the current international situation. Flashpoints in the last group would require substantial changes in the international situation before they could become plausible at all. The two middle categories represent intermediate positions: The second group contains conflicts which might become plausible in time, given the foreseeable evolution of events; the flashpoints in the third group would require both the passage of time and some degree of unforeseen change in the international situation. Table 2, below, distributes the twenty conflict flashpoints into these four categories.

The plausibility of the flashpoints included in the first category derives from the fact that they constitute conflicts which already exist, and in which the great powers clearly perceive an extremely important stake. The relatively small geographical zone of Southwest Asia in which these conflicts occur is worth noting, and will be discussed further in Chapter III.

Conversely, the three flashpoints relegated to the fourth group would each require a major shift in international conditions. The post-Vietnam reluctance of the United States to become involved militarily in Southeast Asia would have to be overcome before involvement in a Vietnam/Thailand conflict could be contemplated. A significantly greater evolution of ties with China would be needed in order for the United States to consider intervening in a Sino/Soviet confrontation. Both the United States and the Soviet Union would have to increase their involvement in southern Africa greatly before any conceivable development in that area would have a chance of leading to conflict between them. These judgments might be disputed by others, however, and none of these developments are entirely inconceivable.

**Table 2. Inherent Plausibility of Conflicts**

**1. Entirely Plausible**

- Extension of the Afghan war
- Struggle for Iran
- Secession in northern Iran
- Extension of Iran/Iraq conflict
- Israeli success in a new Middle East war

**2. Plausible with Passage of Time**

- North Korean attack on South Korea
- Intervention in Angola
- Insurgencies in Yugoslavia
- Problems in Poland
- Escalation in Central America

**3. Plausible in Time with Changing International Conditions**

- Soviet-backed North Korean attack
- Disintegration of Pakistan
- Syrian victory in a new Middle East war
- Conflict in northern Africa
- Disintegration of Yugoslavia
- Conflict in Germany
- Conflict in northern Europe

**4. Plausible Only Following Major International Changes**

- Vietnamese attack on Thailand
- Sino/Soviet confrontation
- Conflict in South Africa

**INITIAL OUTCOMES**

A similar system of rankings can be used to give an idea of the probability of various possible initial outcomes for the different flashpoints. These outcomes represent logical stopping points for the situations in question; that is, they represent an evolution of events at which a new short-term equilibrium might be reached and which could be maintained until disrupted by outside factors. A critical assumption in this determination is that the flashpoint in question is developing, as far as possible, independently of other great power conflicts.

Four main classes of initial outcomes involving conflict, or at least the risk of conflict, between U.S. and Soviet forces have been derived from the scenarios: Isolated incidents, protracted low-level conflict, major conflict, and the deployment of U.S. and Soviet troops into new areas. While the last of these would not necessarily lead to conflict immediately, it would establish conditions for such a conflict later on. In Table 3, each flashpoint is ranked according to the likelihood that it would result in each type of outcome. These rankings were made independently of the prior question of inherent political

plausibility. We asked only "If the conflict did develop, what would be its most likely outcome?"

**Table 3. Likely Outcome of Regional Flashpoints**

Flashpoint	Isolated Incidents	Protracted Low-Intensity Conflict	Major Conflict in Region	New Deployments
1. North Korean Attack on South Korea	2	4	3	2
2. Soviet-Backed North Korean Attack	4	4	1	3
3. Sino-Soviet Confrontation	3	4	3	1
4. Vietnamese Attack on Thailand	1	3	4	2
5. Extension of the Afghan War	1	3	4	2
6. Disintegration of Pakistan	1	2	3	4
7. Struggle for Iran	3	2	2	1
8. Secession in Northern Iran	1	2	2	2
9. Extension of the Iran/Iraq Conflict	4	4	4	1
10. Israeli Success in New Mid-East War	1	4	2	3
11. Syrian Success in New Mid-East War	3	4	1	2
12. Conflict in Northern Africa	1	3	4	2
13. Involvement in Angola	1	2	4	4
14. Conflict in South Africa	2	1	4	3
15. Insurgencies in Yugoslavia	1	2	2	3
16. Disintegration of Yugoslavia	1	4	2	2
17. Problems in Poland	1	4	3	3
18. Conflict in Germany	1	4	2	3
19. Conflict in Northern Europe	1	4	2	2
20. Escalation in Central America	1	2	4	2

1) Most likely outcome 2) Plausible outcome 3) Less plausible outcome 4) Implausible outcome

It is clear from these initial rankings that the overwhelming majority of plausible conflict flashpoints involving the U.S. and the Soviet Union would lead, at least initially, to no more than new troop deployments or isolated incidents. This is not to say that such crises would be trivial or devoid of further consequences. One of the most important conclusions developed in subsequent sections of this report is that any great power confrontation tends to increase both the likelihood and the severity of future conflicts.

The only two flashpoints which were judged to contain a high implicit probability of major U.S./Soviet conflict are a Soviet-backed North Korean attack and a new Middle East war in which the Soviet Union overtly backed a Syrian threat to overrun Israel. Neither of these situations has a high inherent political plausibility, however; both would require significant changes not only in local balances of power (Israel vs Syria, North vs South Korea) but also in U.S. and Soviet behavior. The Korean scenario, in particular, would seem likely only in the context of ongoing U.S./Soviet conflict elsewhere.

Of more practical interest are four flashpoints which appear in the first two quartiles both in the ranking of plausibility and in the risk of major U.S./Soviet conflict. In this group are both of the Iranian flashpoints. Israeli success in a new Middle East war, and insurgencies in Yugoslavia. The geographical grouping of these potential conflict areas is of considerable significance, all the more since this region contains two ongoing conflicts, in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf, whose extension is entirely plausible and could lead to U.S./Soviet incidents or to permanent deployments of great power forces. It is also significant that of the longer-term conflicts for which a major regional war is considered a plausible outcome, two--the disintegration of Pakistan and disintegration of Yugoslavia--are also located in this troubled part of the world.

All of these factors point to a well-defined "arc of conflict" stretching from the Danube to the Indus and including Southern Europe, the Middle East, Southwest Asia, and South Asia. It is here, rather than in more traditional hot spots of U.S./Soviet confrontation such as Central Europe and Korea, that conflict seems most likely through the remainder of this century.

## II. ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL FLASHPOINTS

In assessing the plausibility of the regional flashpoints, the analysis in the previous chapter assumed an international environment which reflected a reasonable extrapolation of present conditions; in other words, a future free of major surprises. Events which could occur in the context of alternate sets of assumptions about broad trends in international politics are described in Chapter III.

In particular, this initial analysis applied the "surprise-free" assumption to the behavior of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Each great power was assumed to continue to act in international affairs in ways similar to its current behavior. In practice, this assumption means that the international behavior of the two countries is characterized by conservatism and opportunism. Their behavior is conservative in the sense that each nation seeks primarily to protect its interests and assets, including its existing network of alliances and military facilities and its self-perceived "natural" area of influence. Each country is also opportunistic, however, in that it is willing to try to expand the level or extent of its influence whenever it perceives particular opportunities for doing so. Each country also attempts to create such opportunities, as in the funnelling of covert aid to dissident organizations, when conditions appear ripe and risks seem small.

Aggressive behavior of this kind, however, does not constitute a purpose superior to the defense of existing positions. Each great power primarily responds to events; it less frequently creates them. Moreover, historically, both countries have passed up possible opportunities to extend their influence and power whenever there seemed to be a significant chance that continuing to pursue such a course would endanger their present assets seriously. Our "surprise-free" model assumes that the great powers will continue to behave in this way.

Accordingly, most of the regional flashpoints described previously are of a reactive, rather than a premeditated, nature. The United States and the U.S.S.R. each react primarily to opportunities or to threats presented by particular local developments and to each other's actions in such situations, rather than initiating events according to a

predetermined agenda for action. Within this reactive assumption, the flashpoints may be divided into those in which the U.S. or the Soviet Union react to threats or opportunities created by third countries, and those in which they react primarily to each other's actions. These are labeled, respectively, "first order" and "second order" flashpoints.

## **FIRST ORDER FLASHPOINTS**

First order flashpoints are those whose causes and parameters are derived primarily from local political and historical factors specific to the actual region of conflict, rather than from the actions of the great powers themselves or from the results of prior events elsewhere in the world. In most cases, the great powers are not involved in these conflicts as principals, but rather as allies, suppliers, and advisors of local nations and other regional actors. Even those first order flashpoints in which the great powers end up employing their own forces directly have their origins in purely local developments.

Three basic types of plausible first order flashpoints can be identified. The first two are grouped under the general title of "targets of opportunity," and refer either to "vulnerable great power allies" or to "power vacuums in critical areas." The third type of first order flashpoint is called "dangerous local conflicts." As the titles imply, the opportunistic aspect of great power behavior is predominant in the first two types of flashpoints. Great power behavior in the third type of first order flashpoint, on the other hand, is motivated principally by defensive considerations, namely the protection of valued allies from local enemies or, alternatively, opposition to a significant expansion of the influence of a major ally of the opposing power.

## **TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY**

Historically, great power initiatives often have resulted from situations in a particular part of the world which presented one or the other of the powers with an opportunity to expand its area of influence. Such opportunities might include a chance to detach an ally of the opposing power, or they might suggest the extension of a great power's influence into countries and areas which previously had not been subject to the predominant influence of either power. In either situation, the great power would hope to achieve a significant increase in its influence in an area as a result of a relatively small effort involving only limited material costs and political risks.

## **Vulnerable Allies**

Both the United States and the Soviet Union have shown themselves willing, and often eager, to make gains in areas in which the other power has established a base of influence, if circumstances seem to indicate that this influence might be waning, and if the potential risk of intervention is commensurate with the perceived strategic or political value of the area in question. In this way, each power regularly probes for weak links in the other's alliance system. A number of the flashpoints fall into this category, including the situations in Kampuchea (Sino/Soviet confrontation), Pakistan, Angola, and Central America.

Great power behavior in such incidents, both in reality and in our flashpoints--is most often risk-averse, because the objective--the permanent expansion of the "aggressor" power's area of influence--could be compromised if the local situation degenerated into direct conflict with the "defending" power. This desire to minimize risk usually rules out the participation of the great power's own regular military forces. Instead, both powers have grown adept at using local allies and surrogate forces to implement their policy goals. Thus, the United States supports Nicaraguan insurgent groups to put pressure on the government in Managua, while the Soviet Union and Cuba support insurgents in El Salvador to destabilize the government of Jose Napoleon Duarte.

This pattern potentially could be repeated in many parts of the world. In 1985, for example, the United States apparently concluded that the internal conflicts in both Angola and Kampuchea had evolved to the point at which U.S. support could enable local insurgent movements to overthrow the Soviet-backed regimes in those countries. Likewise, a number of Central American countries, such as Honduras and Guatemala, not to speak of El Salvador, as well as such Asian countries as Pakistan and the Philippines, represent potentially exploitable weak links in the American chain of alliances.

This type of flashpoint represents the most common, and probably the least dangerous, form of great power competition. The escalatory potential of such situations is most often limited, if for no other reason than the fact that each of the great powers lacks significant physical assets in the immediate region of conflict. In fact, most such scenarios are self-limiting, since it is usually in the interest of the "aggressor" power to prevent escalation. It must be remembered that while "weak links" may be the target of this type of operation, by definition these countries are still located within the area of influence and military predominance of the defending great power. Successful detachment of the target nation from its great power ally and patron, thus, is likely to be possible only if the full



military potential of said patron is not brought to bear on the situation, i.e. if escalation is successfully avoided.

Accordingly, the role played by the great powers in these flashpoints is most often limited to providing local insurgent groups with financial, material, and political support. The last of these may in fact be the most important. Once the "aggressor" great power convinces the international community that the insurgent forces, be they fighting the Soviet-backed government of Nicaragua or the U.S.-backed regime in El Salvador, in fact, represent the aspirations of most citizens of the country in question, it becomes more difficult for the defending power to support its ally effectively. Success of the "aggressor" power's efforts at public diplomacy can thus increase its chances of success by decreasing the probability of escalation. Among the flashpoints, these factors seem to weigh most heavily in Central America and are a critical reason that escalation is considered to be unlikely in the region.

This is not to say, however, that risks of escalation are entirely absent in the first order flashpoints. Certain offensive and defensive tactics can lead to more direct great power involvement, particularly if the forces supported by the "aggressor" power are nearing victory. In such circumstances, more direct great power assistance might be required for the insurgent forces to gain control of heavily defended areas or to defeat regular military units in open combat--especially if air power were available to the beleaguered government. Effective great power aid at this stage could include military advisors in the field, an increased presence of surrogate forces, and even the direct use of the great power's own forces in specialized combat roles. Any of these steps would raise the possibility that the defending power might decide to introduce troops of its own, thus risking a direct confrontation.

The most obvious historical example of such a process, of course, was the gradual escalation of the war in South Vietnam. The Viet Cong insurgency was supported and eventually supplanted by regular North Vietnamese troops, who were themselves supported by vast quantities of Soviet equipment, Soviet advisors, and possibly Soviet military personnel in specialized combat roles. Among the flashpoints, Pakistan and Angola, for the specific reasons discussed below, seem to be the most likely locations of this type of escalation.

It is clearly the defending power, however, which would have the greatest potential interest in escalation. At least a symbolic show of direct military support may sometimes

be considered necessary to secure the continued loyalty of the allied government under attack. In other cases, depending on the circumstances, the defending power may conclude that a timely military intervention could end the problem once and for all. Historical examples of successful counterinsurgency campaigns do exist, such as those conducted by the British in Malaysia and by the United States in the Philippines in the early 1950s.

While the introduction of a great power's own ground forces would be the most visible form of such escalation, and would be considered to be significant politically, the risks of violent incidents between the great powers would arise most directly from the employment of naval and air units. Active aerial surveillance--conducted over Cuba and Nicaragua by the United States or over Pakistan by the Soviet Union, for example--while not an overtly aggressive act in itself, could lead to incidents if the "aggressor" great power had already supplied--and possibly manned--air defense systems for its ally.

Similarly, creation of an active great power naval presence off the coast of a troubled area, a tactic often employed to show resolve without actually being committed to any specific course of action, could place valuable military assets of one or both of the great powers adjacent to the zone of hostilities. This risk would clearly be increased if the naval forces in question were carrying out a blockade or quarantine mission while forces of the opposing power were attempting to resupply their allies in the region. This risk seems particularly relevant in the case of possible future involvements in Angola, Thailand, the Middle-Eastern flashpoints, and Central America.

The risks involved in an overt blockade of a sovereign nation are understood; this action is rightly considered to be a serious step and, indeed, legally an act of war. Violent incidents, moreover, also could result from a more ambiguous policy of attempting to interdict supply lines to insurgent groups, whether by sea or land, when the "aggressor" power is involved actively in the logistical effort. Such actions are one of the key escalatory steps in our "insurgencies in Yugoslavia" flashpoint, for example.

By this reasoning, escalation in a flashpoint involving primarily a low-level insurgency directed against an ally of a great power is more likely to come from the actions of the defending power than from those of the "aggressor." This is consistent with the observations made earlier concerning the likely balance of great power military capabilities in the region. In this context, it is reasonable to conclude that a component of a successful policy for the initiating power is to conduct not only the local operation, but more generally its relations with the other power, in such a way as to discourage the defender from

utilizing its military predominance to escalate the local conflict. The Soviet Union and China were able to do this successfully in both the Korean and Vietnam conflicts; for example, in neither was the full measure of U.S. military potential ever brought to bear

Two exceptions to this practice are worth noting. The first concerns situations in which the great power's ally under attack is remote geographically from the principal area of influence and military predominance of its patron. In this situation, the "aggressor" power would be dealing with the defending great power on a more or less equal basis, and might conclude that a certain degree of escalation would not necessarily be to its disadvantage. Angola, isolated from other Soviet allies and far from the centers of Soviet power would be an example of this sort of situation. Both in our flashpoints and in actuality, the United States is likely to have more leeway to support UNITA than it would have in other structurally similar cases closer to the U.S.S.R.

A second exception concerns situations in which the potential gains to the "aggressor" power are so great that a certain degree of risk might be considered acceptable. If, for example, conditions in Pakistan deteriorated to the point at which the integrity of that country were in serious doubt, and if a pro-Soviet insurgent movement were active there, the Soviet Union might conclude that the advantages of dominating Pakistan--or even a newly independent Baluchistan in a portion of the country--were so great that direct intervention would be justified despite the risk of a U.S. response in kind. This might be true especially if the "aggressor" power felt relatively confident in its ability to secure the situation before its opponent could mobilize effectively for intervention.

These exceptions aside, the risks of escalation in flashpoints that may be characterized as "targets of opportunity" are small. The principal significance of great power opportunistic behavior lies rather in its long term effect on the relationship between them. If the "aggressor" power succeeds in consolidating its influence in a country previously dominated by its opponent, the regional and, ultimately, the global balance of power may be modified. The victorious power may then perceive new possibilities for expansion, while the losing power may have to reconsider the security of areas previously considered unassailable. In this way, the geo-political basis for future competition between the powers can be modified significantly.

The impact of such "losses" on leaders of other allied nations potentially could be more significant. These individuals would be likely to question the ability (and willingness) of their great power patron to protect them in future crises. Recent experience,

especially following the overthrow of U.S. allies in Southeast and Southwest Asia, demonstrated the reality of this phenomenon. It is reasonable to expect that the various friends and allies of the Soviet Union throughout the world would react similarly to any widely publicized defeat of their patron, such as a Soviet retreat from Afghanistan or the U.S.-backed overthrow of the pro-Soviet regimes in Angola or Kampuchea.

### **Power Vacuums**

A second and potentially more volatile type of first order flashpoint could result from the emergence of a perception that a power vacuum existed in a country or region which previously had not been aligned with either of the great powers. The breakdown of internal order in such an area could lead one or both of the great powers to intervene there either to expand its area of influence or to prevent its opponent from doing so.

Two countries, Iran and Yugoslavia, are the likeliest targets for this type of great power activity. The internal situation in both countries is such that central authority could well break down over the next 15 years. Further, both countries are of great strategic and political importance to both great powers. Iran's commanding position on the Persian Gulf would seem to make it both a tempting target for Soviet expansionism and a country whose neutrality, at the very least, is vital to U.S. and Western interests. Its proximity to Soviet borders causes the U.S.S.R. to mirror these Western concerns. Yugoslavia, meanwhile, remains politically, as well as geographically, in a delicate balance between NATO and the countries of the Warsaw Pact. Any change in its status would call into question the political and territorial arrangements which have existed throughout Europe since 1945.

Iran appears to be the more credible "power vacuum" flashpoint in the near term. The stakes involved are clear. Under the Shah, Iran served as an effective focal point for U.S. influence in the Middle East. Not only did Iran provide various military facilities to the United States on the borders of the Soviet Union, but the presence of a friendly government in Tehran potentially made Iran a surrogate for the projection of U.S. military power into a wide area. From the Soviet point of view, a friendly government in Iran could mean implicit Soviet military dominance of the entire Persian Gulf region, and a substantial increase in Soviet influence throughout the Middle East and South Asia. Both powers, thus, would find it advantageous to exert predominant influence in Tehran; if the current Iranian regime were to appear to be losing control of the country, either as a result of its war with Iraq or of an internal political struggle, great power interventions could follow.

The importance of Yugoslavia to the great powers is probably more political than strategic. As a neutral socialist country in Europe, Yugoslavia has eluded the efforts of the Soviet Union to bring it under effective control for forty years. If Yugoslavia were to tilt perceptibly toward either alliance system, the political impact could be considerable, upsetting the balance of political power in Europe. At the same time, the long-term weakness of Yugoslavia's central government and the existence of potentially powerful separatist tendencies in Slovenia and Croatia, as well as in the regions of southern Yugoslavia inhabited by the Macedonian and Albanian minorities, are well known. These problems are likely to be aggravated during the protracted period of economic difficulties projected for Yugoslavia. At some point, these problems could erupt into open factional conflict, with one or more of Yugoslavia's ethnic republics seeking to free itself entirely from Belgrade. Such a development would open the way for great power interventions.

If we assume that the risk-averse behavior demonstrated elsewhere by the great powers also would apply in the cases of Iran and Yugoslavia, it seems probable that the preferred course for both great powers would be to seek influence through the cultivation of local allies, including the embattled but not yet powerless central governments (almost certainly pro-Soviet in the case of Yugoslavia, less predictable in Iran), separatist forces (likely to be pro-Western in Croatia and Slovenia and at least anti-Soviet in southern Yugoslavia, pro-Soviet in northeastern Iran), ideologically-motivated rebel groups allied with one side or the other, and ambitious military or political factions seeking assistance regardless of ideology. If allies were either unavailable or ineffective, the great strategic and political importance of Iran and Yugoslavia could lead one or both of the great powers to conclude that a direct intervention was justified.

There are reasons to believe that the Soviet Union would almost certainly be the "aggressor" power in both cases. The United States and its NATO allies would likely find it difficult, if not impossible, to gain sufficient domestic political support to contemplate direct intervention unless the Soviet Union had previously become directly involved. At the same time, once the U.S.S.R. had become involved, it would be difficult for the United States not to act, thus allowing such an expansion in Soviet influence, without a significant loss of strategic position and international prestige. Resistance of some sort, therefore, would appear to be in order.

Given such a predictable U.S. reaction, though, would the U.S.S.R. intervene initially? The Soviet Union clearly has the physical means to intervene in both Iran and Yugoslavia, having large standing military forces deployed in adjacent areas. Further, the

great inherent value to the Soviet Union of exerting predominant influence in these countries would present a significant motive for action. Soviet behavior in Afghanistan for example, would seem to indicate a willingness to take considerable risks in order to avert instabilities or pursue opportunities in areas adjacent to Soviet territory. There has been considerable speculation that the primary Soviet motive in deciding to intervene in Afghanistan was the fear that, barring such an action, a significant probability existed that an actively hostile regime would appear in Kabul. Similar fears concerning events in Tehran or Belgrade could act as powerful goads to Soviet action.

What form might great power involvement in Iran or Yugoslavia take? If we assume that the United States would not intervene unless the Soviet Union had already done so, it follows that the intervention would be initiated by Soviet support for one of the local factions. In Yugoslavia, such support would most likely be provided to a Serbian or Serbian-dominated central government faced with revolt or outright secession by non-Serbian groups. Such a government might turn to the Soviet Union as the only force which might be able to keep it in power, and "invite" Soviet troops into the country to help it restore order.

In Iran, the Soviets could form an alliance with a left-leaning central government, with insurgent or secessionist forces in the northern part of the country, or with an opportunistic political faction seeking to overthrow the government which professed pro-Soviet views as a means of gaining support from the U.S.S.R. If such a group appeared to be viable, it is possible that the Soviet Union would conclude that its troops could bring the situation under control before U.S. or Western forces could mount an effective response.

A Western counter-intervention in Yugoslavia would most likely be in support of insurgent or secessionist movements in the northern parts of the country (Slovenia and Croatia). It is also possible that separatist movements would be active among the Albanian and Macedonian populations of southern Yugoslavia.

Such groups also could conceivably be pro-Western and, in any case, would certainly be fiercely anti-Serbian and, by extension, anti-Soviet. The U.S. or NATO role in such a situation, at least initially, would be primarily to offer supplies and advice. The interactions between the efforts of one great power to supply insurgent forces and those of the second great power to isolate and quarantine conflict zones could lead to incidents and the potential for escalation. This danger, should incidents occur, would clearly be much

greater in Yugoslavia than in Iran, but the risks in both places would be larger than in the "vulnerable allies" flashpoints discussed previously. In particular, a danger would exist that Soviet interdiction of Western supplies to groups within Yugoslavia could prove ineffective if conducted strictly within Yugoslavian territory. Any expansion of the range of interdiction efforts, however, would directly threaten the integrity of NATO, thus creating significant risks of major escalation.

It is less obvious that the United States would find willing allies in Iran, although certain anti-American factions might cooperate with the U.S. simply to gain the means to resist the Soviet Union. All Iranian factions would fear that if they were seen to depend on either great power, but especially on the U.S., they would lose credibility. If the U.S. intervention were carried out purely to oppose Soviet gains, without strong support from a powerful local faction, American forces might have to be much more directly involved than would otherwise be considered desirable. U.S. air strikes against Soviet forces or positions on Iranian territory might be considered, for example, giving rise to risks of a great power air war over Iran, or even to strikes at each other's bases. For the Soviet Union, this could include attacks on U.S. aircraft carriers in the Arabian Sea or, more ominously, on NATO air bases in eastern Turkey. The U.S., for its part, would have reason to strike Soviet air bases and logistical facilities in Afghanistan, and conceivably even in the southern regions of the Soviet Union.

A less plausible, longer term, and probably less significant theater for a U.S./Soviet confrontation of this sort could develop in the Republic of South Africa, if events in that country led either to a fragmentation of power among a number of component states and power centers or simply a significant weakening of the central government. This case would differ from those of Iran and Yugoslavia, not only in its geographical remoteness and lesser strategic or political significance to either great power, but in the political complexities raised by South Africa in the United States, and consequent disincentives for this country to consider direct involvement. Some form of initial U.S. involvement in more peaceful circumstances, perhaps as mediator or even guarantor of an interim settlement in South Africa, would thus probably be a prerequisite for any U.S. military role in the region.

## **DANGEROUS LOCAL CONFLICTS**

A third type of first order flashpoint which potentially could result in conflict between the great powers stems from local and regional conflicts between major allies of

the powers. Renewed conflict between Israel and Syria or between North and South Korea, for example, could lead to a great power confrontation even if neither the U.S. nor the U.S.S.R. sought one. The motivations for the involvement of the great powers would likely be primarily defensive, intended not to extend the intervening power's area of influence, but rather to prevent the collapse of an important ally. In the case of Korea, the prior presence of U.S. forces in the area of hostilities virtually guarantees prompt U.S. involvement.

A renewed conflict between Israel and neighboring states, primarily Syria, generally is considered to be the most dangerous flashpoint of this type, a perception which may act as a stabilizing influence. Virtually all parties to the situation, both the local actors and the great powers, realize the implicit dangers of escalation which exist in this area, and in the past have acted prudently so as to avoid them. There may indeed be a "crisis management learning curve" at work in this situation, as all participants have come to know what to expect from the others and have tended to curb their behavior just short of the point which could precipitate a major confrontation.

The possibility of escalation in some future conflict remains, nonetheless. For one thing, the Palestinians, who have been denied a viable role in the region, have little to lose from escalation. So long as this persists, a possibility will remain of terrorist or other "irrational" acts triggering a new great power intervention. Moreover, if one of the local combatants were on the verge of total defeat, the losing country's great-power ally might feel compelled to intervene directly, triggering a counter-response by the other power to restore the regional balance. Indeed, the fact that past Arab/Israeli conflicts have evolved along familiar lines could itself lead to difficulties. Given a fixed set of expectations, deviations from familiar patterns could trigger such great uncertainties among the participants as to lead to more dangerous behavior than might otherwise be expected.

Such deviations from expected behavior could take two forms: In response to a Syrian attack, Israeli forces might advance much farther into Arab territory than ever before, attacking Damascus and threatening seriously the survival of the Syrian, and possibly Jordanian, governments. In such a case, it is conceivable that the Soviet Union would introduce forces into Syria. Initially, such a deployment might take place well behind the actual area of battle and be intended as a warning to Israel--and implicitly the United States--of the importance placed by the U.S.S.R. on the situation. If the Israeli advance continued, however, Soviet troops or air units might find themselves in combat with Israeli forces. Alternatively, the Soviet Union could respond to deep Israeli



penetration of Syria with direct air strikes against targets in Israel. Either of these actions, but especially the latter, could trigger a U.S. counter-intervention, most probably making use of U.S. air power to aid Israeli air defense or to carry out strikes against Soviet facilities--airfields or missile sites--in Syria or neighboring nations.

A second possibility is that the forces of Syria and its Arab allies could enjoy unprecedented success and break through the 1967 cease-fire lines into the interior of Israel. In such a case, it is very likely that the United States would intervene, at least with air power and possibly with ground forces. U.S. strikes against Syrian targets could spark conflict with Soviet forces stationed there, especially if the latter were manning air defense positions. Finally, in such a situation, Israel might threaten to use, or actually employ, the nuclear weapons which it is generally believed to possess. Such possibilities would increase the likelihood of a direct U.S. intervention, as American leaders would probably rush to reassure Israeli leaders in order to avert a nuclear threat. However, if the United States were seen as backing an Israeli nuclear threat, and especially if Syria were struck in a nuclear attack, the Soviet Union could choose to retaliate with nuclear weapons of its own.

A new conflict in Korea would be similar in its potential outcomes, but would probably not begin without a more complicated set of prior events. It is hard to imagine that North Korea would attack the South as long as the United States maintains its commitment to the Seoul government, and particularly as long as U.S. troops are stationed near the intra-Korean border. Even if North Korea were desperate enough to be willing to risk a new war with the U.S., its patrons--China and the Soviet Union--would certainly do all in their power to prevent such an action or, if it occurred, to bring it to a speedy close.

If U.S./South Korean ties were to deteriorate over time, however, perhaps as a result of internal political conflicts in Seoul, a set of conditions might emerge in which the North Korean leadership perceived a moment of opportunity, hoping to achieve sufficient initial military success as to make the United States either incapable or unwilling to rescue the Seoul government. A variation of this flashpoint might be possible if a North Korean provocation, such as renewed assassinations of South Korean officials or commando operations and sabotage within South Korea, led the Seoul government to carry out a military retaliation against North Korea which then led to a wider war. These latter circumstances would make it more difficult for China and the Soviet Union to deny aid to the North.

There are additional "dangerous local conflicts," but these are less likely to lead to direct combat between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. because the local actors' ties to the great powers are less well-defined than the Korean and Arab/Israeli cases. Still, under certain circumstances, escalation could take place. A Soviet-backed Iraqi victory in the Gulf war or a renewal of Vietnamese expansionism in Southeast Asia are two examples.

The Soviet Union has built up a close relationship with the present Iraqi regime and would seem to have a significant stake in its survival. If that regime were threatened seriously, therefore, the Soviet Union might consider intervening on its behalf. The problem for the United States in such a situation would be indirect. If the Soviet intervention resulted in a decisive Iraqi victory, and particularly if it led to the stationing of Soviet troops on Iraqi territory, the U.S. and its allies would have to come to grips with the longer term implications of Soviet/Iraqi domination of the northern reaches of the Persian Gulf. It is possible that faced with such a situation, the U.S. would seek to establish its own military presence on territories adjacent to the Gulf, perhaps by stationing forces in Oman and other small states of the Arabian Peninsula. Over time, these new U.S./Soviet military deployments would both alter the politics of the Persian Gulf and create opportunities for direct U.S./Soviet military clashes. It is also possible that Soviet intervention and subsequent Iraqi military success could destabilize Iran, thus creating possibilities for the great power interventions in that country described previously, but with a marked Soviet advantage.

A similar set of scenarios can be derived from possible events in Southeast Asia. A renewed upturn in the level of insurgent activity in Kampuchea could lead to major clashes between Vietnamese and Thai forces, either as a result of Vietnamese actions against insurgent bases inside Thailand or of Vietnamese attacks on Thai facilities intended to coerce that country into abandoning its support of the Kampuchean rebels.

If these measures seemed to be threatening the integrity of Thailand, the United States, unwilling to see Vietnamese--and by implication Soviet--influence expanded in this region, could decide to intervene in Thailand's support. This move, in turn, could trigger Soviet involvement, especially if U.S. actions against Vietnam endangered Soviet maritime forces stationed there. Even if no direct U.S./Soviet conflict resulted from these maneuvers, this series of events could lead to a renewed permanent U.S. presence in Southeast Asia which, by its proximity to Soviet positions in Vietnam, could serve as a potential flashpoint during any subsequent great power crisis or confrontation.

Certain events in Central Europe, and in particular in Germany, also could lead to great power conflict. Soviet military actions against dissidents in East Germany could generate pressures in the Federal Republic for action and, eventually, to trouble on the intra-German border; for example, West German military units might attempt to open the border to refugees. Ultimately, U.S. and Soviet forces in the two German states could be drawn into the fighting. Many changes would have had to have taken place in both East and West Germany for such events to occur, however.

The degree of risk of escalation involved in all of the flashpoints mentioned in this section would depend primarily on the relationship between the great powers at the time. In the past, the United States and the Soviet Union have both demonstrated a willingness and ability to restrain allies and isolate local conflicts, even at the cost of allowing allies to suffer significant defeats. Only if the relationship between the powers had deteriorated to the point where one or the other was unwilling to bear such costs, or if one of the great powers perceived an historic opportunity to inflict a major defeat on its opponent, would there be a significant danger of serious conflict between the great powers.

Even if a particular regional crisis did not lead to a great power war immediately, however, the sort of long-term political effects previously discussed with respect to targets of opportunity would apply here as well. The defeat of an important great power ally could have far-reaching impact on the global balance of power, influencing both direct relations between the great powers and relations between each power and its respective allies. In particular, it might cause the power perceived as the "loser" in the situation to adopt a more militant position in any future crisis in order to retain the support of remaining allies; or it might cause the "losing" power to work actively to create new situations in which it would be more likely to emerge victorious. The "winning" power and its allies, on the other hand, could draw the conclusion that the effectiveness of their opponent had been damaged seriously, and that the chances for further gains at its expense had improved significantly. The interaction of these two effects would not bode well for the stability of the international order in subsequent years.

## **SECOND ORDER FLASHPOINTS**

In the second broad category of flashpoints, the great powers act primarily in response to each other's actions, rather than in response to threats or opportunities created by local circumstances and the actions of third countries. Although third countries remain the theater of military operations, the general intent of the "aggressor" power in these

situations is to manipulate local conditions in such a way as to influence the options and actions of the opposing great power directly.

## **DIVERSIONARY AND RETALIATORY MOVES**

In certain situations, a great power may wish to divert its opponent in order to increase its chances of succeeding in some other enterprise. Diversionary operations could be undertaken to insure the success of expansionary action elsewhere or, conversely, to interfere with the ability of the opposing power to exploit other opportunities that would be threatening to the first power's interests. Alternatively, a power which has suffered a foreign policy defeat at the hands of its opponent may feel required to retaliate by creating or exploiting a situation in which it could emerge victorious, thus restoring the confidence of its allies and presumably making it more difficult for the opponent to exploit its initial victory.

The type of action undertaken for these purposes would likely vary according to the threat or opportunity which had motivated it. It would seem reasonable to expect a certain degree of parallelism between a perceived threat or opportunity and the diversionary move which may have resulted from it. This is due primarily to the conservative tendency in great power policy making which has already been noted. If we maintain the assumption that both U.S. and Soviet decision makers seek to avoid open conflict, it follows that diversions and retaliations would be undertaken at the lowest level deemed sufficient for the purpose at hand. Further, if the power initiating a second order flashpoint is engaged in hostilities elsewhere at the same time, or had recently sustained a significant defeat, it is entirely possible that it would not have the political or material resources to undertake large-scale operations, especially those requiring the deployment of its own military forces.

Accordingly, if the attempt to take advantage of an opportunity were manifested primarily by means of actions taken by allies or surrogates of the opposing great power, countermoves would likely also be restricted to actions by proxies or insurgents. If, on the other hand, conflict between the forces of the great powers had already been initiated, one or both of the powers might decide to react by putting pressure on the forces of the opposing power elsewhere in the world. Even in this latter case, however, an important distinction would remain between aid to an ally in its attack on the forces of the other power and a decision by one power to attack the other directly. The first, while certainly an escalatory step, would not be without historical precedents, such as the wars in Korea, Southeast Asia, and Afghanistan. Significantly, while such wars can effectively tie down

large numbers of the other power's forces and inflict high costs on the opponent, their cost to the initiating power is still relatively low. An attack on the other power with one's own forces, however, would be without precedent, potentially more costly, and clearly much more dangerous.

### **Moves Against a Great Power's Allies**

The most common and least costly option for diversion or retaliation would be to encourage instability in countries allied with the opponent. Such actions clearly would resemble operations previously described as "targets of opportunity" and operationally there would indeed be similarities. Important differences, however, would exist between these two types of scenarios in terms of the motives of the great powers and the possible consequences of their actions.

Opportunities for diversionary or retaliatory moves are not, of course, created out of thin air; local conditions must be appropriate, at least to a minimal degree. There must be some form of preexisting active domestic social or political opposition which is willing to cooperate with the opposing great power. This is hardly a rare condition, however, and potential targets for this sort of action on the part of each of the powers are plentiful.

In Central America and the Caribbean islands, the endemic instabilities of a number of U.S. allies, along with the presence of relatively effective Soviet surrogates, seems likely to provide multiple opportunities for Soviet actions throughout the century. Given the obvious importance of this region to the security interests of the United States, no U.S. government can afford to ignore even relatively minor developments in these areas, regardless of its policy objectives in other parts of the world. It is possible, therefore, for the Soviet Union to apply considerable pressure to U.S. policy choices and freedom-of-action at relatively low cost to itself, both in terms of resource expenditures and risk, by fomenting instability in this region--even if no realistic chances for concrete gains can be seen.

A number of theaters also exist for low-level diversionary or retaliatory actions on the part of the United States. Ironically, most of these exist as a result of past Soviet successes. Angola, Nicaragua, Kampuchea, and Ethiopia, having been secured by pro-Soviet forces in the past decade, are now all potential targets for U.S. action. Additionally, the most obvious theater for operations of this sort by the United States is Afghanistan. There is an important difference, however, between this situation and those previously mentioned--the engagement of large numbers of Soviet troops in combat there.

It is clear that the Soviet Union will not allow Afghanistan to be controlled by hostile forces, and will expend whatever resources are required to prevent this from happening. The events of the past seven years suggest that this resource expenditure may in fact be substantial. Although there is no hope of setting up a stable pro-Western regime in Kabul, the United States, if it so desired and local conditions permitted, could seek to increase the cost to the Soviet Union of preventing such a development by increasing the quality and level of its support for Afghan insurgents.

Less prominent theaters for this type of operation also exist for each of the great powers. The Soviet Union, for example, could attempt to forge links with rebel groups in the Philippines or to encourage instability in the pro-Western states of the Persian Gulf. The United States, for its part, could seek to take advantage of latent instabilities in certain Soviet allies in the Middle East and North Africa, such as Syria, Libya and South Yemen.

The possible outcomes of this sort of low-level diversion vary considerably. The most stable and least escalatory solution would be the conclusion of a perhaps tacit understanding in which one power ceased or diminished activities in a certain region in return for similar concessions by the other power elsewhere. Alternatively, the two powers could decide to respond to diversionary pressures by heating up additional conflicts as circumstances permitted, thus multiplying the number of great-power flashpoints around the world.

More directly, either power could react to harassment in regions which it considers to be in its sphere of influence by taking direct advantage of its military predominance in that region. In this way, for example, the United States could respond to pressure in Central America by employing military force directly against Cuba, while the Soviet Union could retaliate against Pakistan for any increase in U.S. involvement in Afghanistan. Such actions could lead to further rounds of escalation and retaliation if the general state of great power relations made it difficult or impossible for negotiated solutions to the local problems to be found.

### **Moves Directly Against a Great Power's Forces**

If events progressed to the point where the military forces of one or both of the great powers were engaged in combat against the allies of the other, the power whose allies were being attacked could attempt to create a diversion on a significantly higher level by carrying out attacks on the armed forces of its opponent. The Soviet Union, for example, could attempt to relieve pressures in South Asia by encouraging North Korea to launch an

attack on South Korea, automatically involving the U.S. forces stationed in that country. This type of horizontal escalation also might be employed in the case of a conflict resulting from a "power vacuum" flashpoint, as discussed above. Great power conflict in Iran, for example, could lead the Soviet Union to attack U.S. military installations, not only in the countries adjacent to the area of hostilities, but as far afield as Northeastern Africa, in an effort to disrupt the American support base.

There is some evidence to indicate that the Soviets may indeed have tried such a policy, albeit at a low level, in Korea in the late 1960s. It has been speculated that the wave of attacks against South Korea which began in late 1967 and included incidents on the DMZ, the infiltration of sabotage teams into the South, the attempted assassination of South Korean President Park, as well as the capture of the U.S.S. *Pueblo* and the shooting down of a U.S. EC-131 intelligence-gathering aircraft, were tied to the coincident U.S. escalation of the war in Vietnam and, especially, to the introduction at that time of South Korean troops into Southeast Asia.

Plausible U.S. options for this type of maneuver seem to be more limited. If the active cooperation of the People's Republic of China could be secured, it is possible to imagine situations in which Chinese pressure against Vietnam, or even against the Soviet Far East, could be used in this way. Such an arrangement might be somewhat more likely if the primary initial theater of great power confrontation were in South or East Asia.

The escalatory potential of this type of action is clearly great, not only because of the type of aggression involved, but also because of the assumed context of ongoing conflict. The opening of a "second front" would clearly make settlement of the original great power dispute more difficult, while creating a new set of issues to be resolved. Further, the fact that one of the powers chose such an aggressive policy rather than attempting to settle the original conflict peacefully would reflect an intransigent attitude on its part--and would be likely to encourage similar intransigence on the part of its opponent.

Given this sort of attitude, one could expect that a stable outcome would probably only result from the decisive defeat of the diversionary initiative, which would move the focus of attention back to the primary crisis and possibly contribute to its solution by forcing one or both of the antagonists to adopt a more flexible position. Success of the diversionary initiative, on the other hand, or an inconclusive outcome, could most likely contribute to the general deterioration of the global situation by encouraging mutual intransigence and perhaps further rounds of escalation and diversion.

## **Direct Threats Against the Opposing Power**

In times of serious international tensions, the great powers could employ their own forces to put varying degrees of pressure on each other. Such actions could have a number of advantages when compared to the use of allied or surrogate forces. The powers' own forces would be expected to be more reliable and possibly more effective than those of any ally. Further, direct action would make it possible, at least in theory, to maintain a much greater degree of control over operations.

The circumstances in which such moves might be employed include the same possibilities mentioned as stimuli for diversionary and retaliatory moves: To ensure the success of expansionary moves elsewhere, to interfere with the ability of the opposing power to exploit opportunities, or to retaliate for a perceived defeat at the hands of the opposing power. They also would include situations in which serious problems developed directly between the great powers that did not yet involve open conflict in a third country. A crisis brought on by political developments in Europe, for example, or perhaps by an ideosyncratic incident such as the downing of the Korean airliner in 1982, could result in military moves intended to apply direct pressure against the adversary.

The specific type of action taken by a great power in this context would clearly depend on the form and magnitude of the ongoing crisis. Relatively low-level options would include such things as staging military exercises, increasing the alert level of specific forces, and deploying additional armed units in the vicinity of actual or threatened areas of conflict--clearly a more serious move. The deployment of U.S. troops to Southwest Asia--perhaps in reaction to Soviet threats against Pakistan or Iran--would be one such action. The Soviet Union, for its part, could deploy air and ground units near its border with Norway, for example, in response to an increased level of tension in Europe, or adjacent to Turkey in response to events in the Middle East or Southwest Asia.

Perhaps the most likely, and certainly not the least dangerous, variant of this strategy would involve the deployment of naval units into clearly threatening positions. The movement of U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups or attack submarines into the Norwegian Sea or the Northwestern Pacific in the vicinity of the Kamchatka Peninsula would be a serious move, threatening significant Soviet strategic assets. A Soviet deployment of large numbers of submarines equipped with cruise missiles near the U.S. Atlantic or Pacific coasts would have a similar effect. A decision by one or both of the powers to begin the forward basing of air units in Central Europe, possibly combined with an increase in active aerial surveillance in the region, would have comparable results.



A final level of escalation would consist of the use of the great power's forces in direct combat against each other. Such a move could occur as an outgrowth of one of the positioning maneuvers mentioned above. The Soviet Union, for example, might decide to seize the Norwegian island of Svalbard, in the Arctic Ocean, as a forward base for the protection of its Northern Fleet operations. Conflict also could occur between naval forces if one or the other of the powers deliberately set out to harass the other's fleet. More plausibly, naval conflict could start as a result of the efforts of one power to enforce a blockade in a critical region. An active challenge of such a blockade by the other power could lead in the tense environment which we are assuming to incidents which spread into a more general naval conflict.

None of these moves would be considered by either power except as a near-to-last resort in a situation in which general war seemed imminent, or in which one of the powers had reason to fear that it would suffer an unacceptable set-back if it did not take the situation "to the brink." U.S. naval actions during the Cuban Missile crisis probably were as close to a situation of this kind as can be found in the history of U.S./Soviet relations. It should be noted, however, that the more moderate variations of this policy, especially those concerning the deployment of naval forces to areas of potential conflict, have become more or less standard procedure for both powers. Moves made by both the U.S. and Soviet fleets in the Mediterranean during the 1973 Middle East War are an example of this type of behavior.

Even if neither power desired open warfare with the other, the situations discussed here would have the potential to generate inadvertent incidents which could escalate to general confrontations. Certain geographical areas would be critically important in the event of war, regardless of the origin of the crisis in question. This leads to the possibility that as military forces (naval forces in the case of the North Pacific and the Norwegian Sea, air units in the case of the European central front) converged on areas which are both critical and congested, they could begin, quite literally, to get in each other's way.

In normal times, incidents between U.S. and Soviet military units are easily ignored, even when loss of life is involved. The downing of a U.S. Army helicopter inside Czechoslovakia in 1983 and the more recent shooting of a uniformed U.S. liaison officer in East Germany did not lead to conflict between the powers, for example, or even to protracted tensions. In a condition of persistent international tensions, however, the greater latitude which is given necessarily to local military commanders along with increased alert levels, could make it more difficult to find a correct and stabilizing response

to accidental engagements--or even to intentional but non-threatening incidents of harassment.

The growing deployment of space-based systems for communication, navigation, and intelligence gathering also could create potential points of friction. Eventually, space assets will play a direct role in target identification and localization in tactical situations, and perhaps as weapon platforms as well. At the same time, the capabilities of antisatellite systems are certain to continue to improve, along with the active defense capabilities of satellites. Even if the possible ramifications of space-based strategic defenses components are not considered, it is clear that the possible impact of ambiguous events in space could become considerable in times of extreme tension.

More generally, there are risks involved in any large-scale mobilization. In a tense political and military environment, mutual mobilizations and high alert levels would be intrinsically hazardous. The possibility would exist for one side or the other to arrive at the mistaken conclusion that the other's preparations indicated that it had decided to launch an attack, and that there would be a significant advantage to striking first. This danger might be increased if one side or the other experienced significant difficulty in maintaining a high level of alert and mobilization over a period of time, and thus was faced with the choice between committing its forces to combat or running the risk of losing the ability to react to an attack by the other side.

This risk is clearly greatest in Europe, due to the large numbers of troops which both sides deploy there. Any scenario which involves those troops, therefore, includes an additional element of risk. For this reason, the regional conflict scenarios in Yugoslavia and in Northern and Central Europe, while their inherent plausibility is low, would be perhaps the most dangerous and volatile of all the scenarios.

### III. LINKAGES AND PRECONDITIONS

The analysis presented in the preceding chapter highlights the difficulty of imagining a single conflict which could take the two great powers from their current state of uneasy peace to a condition of open warfare. This prospect becomes significantly greater, however, when several flashpoints are examined jointly, with an eye to the possible synergy among them. Accordingly, in this chapter we examine the connections both among regional flashpoints, and between the flashpoints and the greater international environment. This last linkage can be thought of in terms of the necessary preconditions for conflict. A number of identifiable events and situations, while not involving great power conflict themselves, could have a significant impact on the probability of such a conflict subsequently or on the likely outcome of any conflict that did take place. Both factors will figure in the design of plausible patterns of conflict which could lead to war between the powers.

#### PRECONDITIONS TO CONFLICT

The external factors which bear on the development of particular local conflicts include both events specific to the region in question and broader considerations of international circumstances, in particular as they affect the goals and options of the great powers. These external factors are examined here in three categories: Purely local developments in various areas of the world, effects on the principal European allies of the two powers, and internal conditions of the two great powers.

##### Local Developments

The observation that both great powers behave opportunistically implies that the conditions for their intervention in various parts of the world are created in large part by local actors and events. The analysis in the previous chapter examined the role of the local actors most directly concerned, those actually involved in potential conflicts. It is also important, however, to take note of the potential impact of other actors in areas where conflict is possible, since these often can play a critical role in determining both the

likelihood and form of regional conflicts, thus defining and limiting the options of the great powers. The survey which follows is organized geographically, beginning in East Asia and proceeding to the west.

*Sino/American Relations and the Question of Taiwan.* The most important political variable determining the plausibility of great power conflict in East Asia is without doubt the state of Sino/American relations. If these relations continue to improve, and particularly if they acquire a more significant security dimension, the likelihood of joint U.S./Chinese actions in future contingencies would increase. Such a development would increase the likelihood of U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia measurably. Whereas an independent U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia would be plausible only in response to overt Vietnamese aggression, an invasion of Thailand being the most likely contingency, the possibility of active cooperation with China might make U.S. intervention under more ambiguous circumstances a possibility, or even make possible serious efforts to "roll back" the Vietnam-backed governments of Kampuchea or Laos. Moreover, if U.S./Chinese relations continue to improve, the United States could become an important indirect participant in the region by guaranteeing to support China in the event of Soviet military pressure. Such guarantees could lead eventually to U.S. involvement in a Sino/Soviet confrontation in Northeast Asia. It is also possible that a closer working relationship between the United States and China would induce the Chinese to take a more active role in support of Pakistan and the Afghan insurgent movement. This could take the form of an increase in direct material support for the Afghans or, more likely, of increased Chinese pressure on Soviet and Vietnamese positions in Southeast Asia in the event of a more aggressive Soviet posture versus Pakistan.

The opposite development, a serious deterioration in Sino-American relations, also would have a significant impact on events in East Asia. The question of Taiwan's future remains the likeliest source of such an estrangement. If China's posture toward Taiwan took a radical turn for the worse, as would follow a declaration of independence on the part of the Taiwanese or the disclosure that Taiwan possessed nuclear weapons, U.S./P.R.C. relations would suffer as well. U.S./Chinese relations also could deteriorate if a radical change in the preferences of the Chinese leadership took place following the demise of Deng Xiaoping, and the new leaders took the country either back to Maoist orthodoxy or towards a closer relationship with the Soviet Union. In either of these cases, the prospect of joint Sino/American initiatives would disappear and, with it, the Southeast Asian scenarios described in the Introduction. In Northeast Asia, however, a Sino/American split

would increase the likelihood of a North Korean decision to invade the south, since North Korea would then be guaranteed the benevolent neutrality, if not the active support, of China, as well as of the Soviet Union.

*Japanese Rearmament.* While Japan is a critical political and economic actor in East Asia, it has not played a significant, independent military role since the end of the Second World War. The "surprise free" projection of the international system assumes that Japan will maintain its current posture, rearming only modestly while maintaining close security ties with the United States. Such an increase in Japanese military capabilities within the context of a close relationship with the United States would probably not bring radical changes to the region; it would, in fact, likely increase the stability of the region by offering further disincentives to Soviet or North Korean adventurism.

If Japan embarked on a major rearmament program while moving away from its alliance with the United States, however, the impact on regional conditions could be great. The relationship between Japan and China could be altered radically, with Beijing becoming much more wary of Tokyo, and possibly deciding that it had to seek accommodation with the U.S.S.R. to protect itself. Such a development could greatly increase the probability of a North Korean attack, as China might decide to support such a move, with or without an alliance with the U.S.S.R., to curtail Japanese influence. At the same time, U.S. options in Northeast Asia would be severely curtailed.

*The Role of India.* Although it is unlikely that India would play a direct military role in any great power conflict, its political attitude towards the powers, as well as the state of its relations with Pakistan, are likely to be of considerable importance in the case of any confrontation in South or Southwest Asia. From the point of view of the United States, the most serious development would be a renewal of warfare between India and Pakistan. This could follow from a number of events, including a significant advance in Pakistani nuclear capabilities which India perceived to be threatening, or credible allegations of Pakistani support for separatist elements in India. If, as seems likely, such a war led to a significant defeat of Pakistani forces, there would be a risk that it would destabilize the Islamabad government. In turn, this would greatly increase the likelihood of serious secessionist activity in Pakistan, as well as sealing the fate of the Afghan insurgency.

*The Role of Iran.* Even if Iran never became the theater of a direct great power confrontation, political developments in that country almost certainly will have a significant impact on the entire region from South Asia to the Middle East. If Iran were to move

significantly closer to the Soviet Union, a development which appears unlikely at present, the position of the pro-Western government in Pakistan would become increasingly precarious. In particular, the possibility of serious insurgent movements in the Baluchi areas of western Pakistan would be greatly increased, since such groups could then have direct access to support both from the Soviet Union, by way of Afghanistan, and from Iran.

Conversely, if a strong and stable government in Tehran were to take an increasingly activist and effective anti-Soviet stance in the region, the prospects of the Afghan insurgency might improve and, with them, the possibility of aggressive Soviet behavior toward both Pakistan and Iran intended to curtail support for the insurgents. It is unlikely that even an anti-Soviet Iranian government would be pro-American, however. More probably, it would represent only a marginal change from the current Islamic regime following termination of the war with Iraq.

*Developments in the Arab World.* The evolution of the Arab world and, in particular the progress of Islamic fundamentalism, will have a critical impact on the future options of both great powers in the wide area stretching from North Africa to South Asia. Superficially, it might seem that an increase in the political influence of Islamic fundamentalism would lead to greater hostility toward both great powers in the Arab world. There are reasons to believe, however, that U.S. goals and interests might be more vulnerable than those of the U.S.S.R.

Although they appear to be stable at present, the governments of such major U.S. allies in the region as Egypt and Jordan are potentially vulnerable to fundamentalist forces. Other influential regional actors, particularly Kuwait, may face similar problems and, over the longer term, even Saudi Arabia could be threatened by a fundamentalist tide. The accession of a Khomeini-like fundamentalist leader in one of the smaller Persian Gulf states also would be a serious blow to U.S. interests and freedom-of-action in the region, particularly as developments of this sort in any one country could lead the rest to curtail visible links to the U.S., such as providing any sort of military facilities, for fear of bringing the same fate onto themselves. Denial of military facilities, of course, would make effective U.S. interventions in South or Southwest Asia much more difficult. The Soviet Union, however, given its geographical position, would retain the ability to project forces into these regions regardless of the fate of its local military facilities. Indeed, the U.S.S.R. might be more willing to intervene in the region if limitations had been imposed on possible U.S. responses.

*Greek-Turkish Relations.* The effectiveness of U.S. policy in the eastern Mediterranean region, which includes both Southern Europe and the Middle East, depends in large part on the relationship of Greece and Turkey to each other and to the NATO alliance. The long-standing hostility between these two countries leaves the question of the continued stability of these ties in doubt, at least to some degree. A renewal of open Greek-Turkish conflict on Cyprus or elsewhere would make it increasingly difficult for the United States to remain on friendly terms with both nations, and could create opportunities for Soviet adventurism in the eastern Mediterranean.

Assuming that Turkey were to maintain its current strongly anti-Soviet stance, this political shift would probably be felt primarily in Greece, which might decide to adopt a more neutralist stance, including withdrawal from NATO and denial of U.S. military facilities now there. Such a development could have a significant impact on the Yugoslav scenarios by making it more difficult for the United States and NATO to intervene in that country. In particular, it would be more difficult for the U.S. to provide support to anti-Soviet insurgent groups in southern Yugoslavia. Loss of Greek facilities also would complicate U.S. options in the Middle East.

A more serious problem for U.S. policy would result from an estrangement between the United States and Turkey. This could happen if Turkey were perceived to be the aggressor in a renewed military conflict with Greece, and domestic political constituencies led the U.S. to reimpose sanctions on Turkey in response. While it is unlikely that even such a drastic step would result in a rapprochement between Turkey and the Soviet Union, it might well result in the loss to the United States of access to Turkish military facilities. The frequency with which those facilities are mentioned in our analysis of flashpoints in the Southwest Asian region is a measure of the potential seriousness of their loss. If this development coincided with a negative political change in the Arab world, as described in the previous section, the United States might find itself with few, if any, viable options for the projection of military power into a large and crucial region of the world.

*Developments in Southern Africa.* While great power conflict anywhere in Africa remains unlikely, certain factors might increase the probability of direct U.S. involvement in Angola, the only African conflict scenario with a degree of near-term plausibility.

The close working relationship between South Africa and the UNITA rebels is one of the major reasons why open U.S. involvement with UNITA has been ruled out to date.

Accordingly, if UNITA's dependence on South Africa were ended, or at least curtailed significantly, the U.S. might consider closer ties with the insurgents. A continuing deterioration in the internal situation of South Africa could contribute to such a break if it led to a concentration of South African military resources on domestic problems, and thus to an end of the current, activist regional policy of the Pretoria government. Alternatively, a settlement of the Namibia question which led to the withdrawal of South African armed forces from that country, by decreasing Pretoria's direct interest in the Angolan situation, might have a similar effect. Finally, it is possible that UNITA might distance itself from its South African ally in the hope of U.S. support.

*Politics and Economics in Latin America.* While the importance of Latin America in this analysis lies primarily in its political and strategic value to the United States, the probability of conflict in the region is tied closely to its political and economic evolution. If this evolution were smooth and free of local crises, the opportunities for Soviet intervention would be few and the risk of great power conflict small. Current trends, however, paint a much less attractive picture. The endemic economic difficulties of this impoverished region and the political instabilities which they engender, contribute in no small way to the relative success of armed insurgent movements throughout the region, many of which can serve as potential tools for Soviet adventurism.

### **Developments in Europe**

To the extent that conflict flashpoints have been identified in Europe itself, developments in that region are important in the same way as the local developments examined in the preceding section. In addition, however, the central role played by the European nations in the foreign policies of both great powers gives European matters a higher and more far-reaching significance. In a general way, European developments help to define and limit the foreign policy goals and options of both great powers.

*Eastern Europe.* Preservation of its preeminence in Eastern Europe is clearly one of the most important permanent goals of the Soviet Union. The commitment of Soviet resources which is required to maintain this position, however, potentially could act as a constraint on Soviet options elsewhere in the world. This would be true particularly if economic problems and political unrest in one or more countries of Eastern Europe reached a level which required a significant increase in the Soviet military presence there, thus reducing the forces and the resources available for use elsewhere in the world.



More generally, it seems reasonable to assume that if the situation in Eastern Europe were to evolve towards a higher level of instability and tension, the Soviet Union might be less willing to engage in potentially risky enterprises in other parts of the world, even if the material means were available to do so. The risk-averse nature of great power behavior is in large part responsible for this. Neither power is likely to take on major new risks at a time when the key central areas appear to be insecure. Soviet leaders also would be wary of undertaking new commitments at a time that they faced uncertain demands on their resources and attention.

It is also possible, of course, that unrest in Eastern Europe might lead to great power conflict in Europe itself. The possibility that it might do so directly has been discussed with respect to Poland and East Germany in Chapter I. The unique position of East Germany deserves special attention. The continued evolution of its "special relationship" with the Federal Republic of Germany might at some future point so displease the Soviet government as to lead to a Soviet crack-down in East Germany. If this resulted in large-scale violence, the possibility of some sort of independent interventions by West Germany could not be ruled out and an East-West crisis of major proportions could take form very quickly.

A more distant possibility is that the threat of difficulties in Eastern Europe might lead the Soviet Union to adopt a harder line towards Yugoslavia in an effort to regain control of that country and end the example which it provides of independence. Any such considerations, however, would have to be balanced against the risks discussed above.

*Western Europe.* The political evolution of the West European nations and the NATO alliance will clearly be a crucial factor in determining U.S. goals and options and, possibly, the opportunities available to the Soviet Union. In particular, the prospects for effective U.S. intervention, not only in possible European conflicts, but also in potential conflicts in Southwest Asia and the Middle East, would be greatly enhanced if a strong and cohesive Western Europe lent political support to those endeavors. On the other hand, a situation in which NATO were weak and divided, or in which serious divisions had come to exist between European nations and the United States, would likely decrease the probability that the U.S. would be willing or able to intervene. This, in turn, could act as an incentive for Soviet action.

Conditions in Western Europe also have considerable impact on Soviet policy. A long-standing goal of Soviet policy has been to distance Europe from the influence of the

United States. This objective has its roots in Soviet ideology, but reflects more practical considerations of geo-politics and economics as well. Historical precedents, most recently the intervention in Afghanistan and the 1982 coup in Poland, indicate clearly that Soviet aggression can have a strong negative impact on Soviet/West European relations, tending to strengthen the political (and security) links between Western Europe and the United States. In this light, the Soviet desire to gain friends in the West may serve as a constraint on its actions, especially at times when Soviet leaders perceive particularly good opportunities, or politically strong needs, to improve their standing in Europe at the expense of the United States.

### **Domestic Conditions in the Great Powers**

The foreign policy choices made by the great powers cannot be understood without reference to domestic factors within the two countries. While certain fundamental assumptions were made concerning the basis of great power behavior at the beginning of this study, within these broad parameters the day-to-day behavior of the great powers is subject to a number of influences which may be only vaguely related to the general international situation. Such factors can determine the reaction of the powers to international opportunities as they arise.

*Domestic Politics.* One obvious factor influencing the practical attitudes of the powers towards immediate problems and opportunities is their internal political circumstance. It is clear, for example, that the period of internal political weakness following the Watergate affair was a factor in the relative immobility of U.S. policy through much of the 1970s. Similarly, Soviet policy in the late 1970s and early 1980s was hampered by an aging leadership and an exclusive focus on resolving succession problems.

In the United States, periodic shifts in public attitudes cannot be ignored in view of the critical role played by elected officials in foreign policy decision-making. To a certain extent, public attitudes towards foreign policy questions are formed as a result of experience. A great deal has been said along these lines concerning the effect of Vietnam on subsequent U.S. policy. While popular attitudes were clearly not the only factor which led to a diminution of U.S. foreign policy assertiveness in the 1970s, they certainly were an important element.

Popular opinion on foreign policy questions also responds to larger shifts in domestic political attitudes. Increased popular support for an activist U.S. foreign policy in

the 1980s can be traced back in part, not only to such specific foreign policy events as the Iranian hostage crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, but also to the resurgence of a belligerent patriotism--an attitude born in reaction to the quietude of the 1970s and encouraged by a very popular president.

The political factors which influence Soviet policy are clearly very different from those which are important in the United States. The impact of popular opinion is negligible, while the role of the party elite is all important. The evolving balance of power among the individuals and factions that make up the leadership of the Soviet Union largely determines foreign policy choices; policy positions are mainly a reflection of factional struggles for power rather than a source of conflict. While the evolution of Soviet policy is often difficult for Western observers to interpret accurately, it is possible to trace general patterns with a good deal of confidence.

In particular, obvious periods of innovation and relative aggressiveness in Soviet foreign policy clearly coincide with the tenure of dynamic, confident leadership groups. This was evident in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the first major expansion of Soviet influence in the developing world coincided with the domestic activism of the governing group led by Nikita Khrushchev. It seems reasonable to assume that strong, confident leaders looking forward to wielding power for some time might be more willing to take risks in the pursuit of desired ends, as well as more likely to be in a position to mobilize support for such actions. Conversely, periods of transition or of aging and uncertain leaders, such as were experienced in the mid-1960s during the post-Khrushchev transition and in the late 1970s and early 1980s, tend to be characterized by more conservative foreign policy stances.

It is too early to be certain that the more vigorous leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev will bring a period of renewed innovation in Soviet foreign policy, but the question is without doubt an essential one. Moreover, there are clear signs which point in this direction: Diplomatic initiatives directed at Europe, China, and Japan demonstrate a flexibility not seen in Soviet foreign policy for some time. Further, the new Soviet leader is seeking strenuously to seize the high ground with respect to arms control negotiations.

*Economic Considerations.* Economic factors are also of considerable importance in determining the actions of both powers, since they determine the means available to implement political will. At present, the increasingly serious economic difficulties felt by the Soviet Union may be acting as a constraint on its foreign policy options, in particular by

limiting the ability of the U.S.S.R. to offer large-scale, financial support to potential allies in the third world in return for their political and military cooperation. This situation has the effect of both reducing Soviet influence with existing allies, who find it necessary to look West for needed development aid and private investment, and of making it more difficult for the U.S.S.R. to gain new friends in the developing world who might otherwise be attracted to the Soviet camp; Mozambique provides the most direct example of this phenomenon.

The Soviet Union's economic difficulties will have a direct impact on Soviet options in Europe, reinforcing political incentives to avoid overt interventions--particularly in Europe itself. Both to relieve its own economic stagnation, and, more pointedly, to avoid economic difficulties in Eastern Europe, the U.S.S.R. requires peaceful and cooperative relations between East and West. In such an environment, access to Western technology, manufactured goods, capital, and markets is facilitated. Overt Soviet interventions, on the other hand, even those far afield, tend to cause such exchanges to narrow down--at least temporarily.

More broadly, the high priority which is now given to economic problems by the Soviet government should tend to focus its attention more firmly on domestic issues, thus offsetting in part the greater political dynamism mentioned above. Highly centralized governments, like individuals, tend to have difficulty doing several different things at the same time. A preoccupation with economic issues, other things being equal, is likely to decrease the interest and ability of Soviet leaders to take foreign initiatives.

While the much larger U.S. economy does not impose such stringent constraints on American actions, the fiscal problems of the U.S. Government would have foreign policy implications in the near term if they result in major reductions in foreign assistance programs and in military spending. As a rule, however, economic considerations support an expansive and successful American role in world affairs; in the absence of armed conflict, the U.S. brings tremendous competitive advantages to the global struggle for great power position and influence.

*Domestic Conditions and International Conflict.* Economic and political factors are not likely to cause fundamental changes in the basic foundations of great power relations in the short term. Their impact on the ability of the powers to carry out desired policies or to take advantage of new opportunities may be considerable over the long term, however. This might be particularly noticeable in periods when one power's domestic strength

coincides with the other's weakness, since at such times it is reasonable to expect that the strong power could make substantial gains at the expense of its adversary.

Of more practical importance, however, is the question of how internal conditions in one power may be perceived by decision-makers in the other. A perception of weakness in the opposing power could be an important consideration in taking a decision to underwrite a potentially risky initiative. It seems plausible that such considerations were relevant in the Soviet decisions to expand their security roles in Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Angola in the 1970s. In this case, the Soviet perception was correct; in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate, the U.S. executive was in no position to respond powerfully to Soviet challenges. If the true state of the opposing power were incorrectly analyzed, however, a misperception of great power weakness could imply a very significant potential for conflict. It is clear, for example, that the Soviet Union underestimated the Western reaction to its intervention in Afghanistan. While direct conflict did not result from this act, the relationship between the powers suffered considerably as the U.S. shifted to a harder foreign policy line, which continues to the present. In some future international circumstances, such shifts in broad policy could presage more assertive behavior with respect to regional situations and a greater risk of combat between the great powers.

## LINKAGES AMONG CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS

It is clear that no arbitrarily defined region of the world can be examined in isolation from all others. Long-standing political and economic relationships, as well as the realities of global geo-politics and military logistics ensure that conflict in any one area will have repercussions in many others.

The question of linkages can be examined from a number of different angles. The most clear cut of these is the possibility of direct political or military factors linking events in one or more regions. This includes short-term considerations, such as the so-called "spill-over" of hostilities into previously unaffected regions as one side or the other seeks tactical advantage by extending the area of battle. Such a broadening of conflict also could take place in response to strategic considerations, as one or the other of the great powers sought to create problems for its opponent in additional parts of the world, thus tying down military assets.

Linkages also exist in a chronological sense; the fact of prior conflict would have an impact on subsequent great power behavior, just as the fact of 40 years of U.S./Soviet

post-war competition without direct conflict has had an impact on the current expectations and behavior of the two powers. In analyzing this factor, we elaborate on the distinction made in the preceding chapter between first and second order flashpoints; that is, between flashpoints which were plausible in a context of "normal" great power relations and those which might become plausible only if some prior conflict had occurred. In particular, this distinction is broadened to examine the question of what the great powers' response might be if a number of first order conflicts were to occur, each for its own ideosyncratic reasons and without direct links among them, in the course of a relatively brief period of time.

In addition, we consider other events and developments which, while they may not involve the possibility of direct great power confrontation, could lead to changes in the powers' attitudes and reactions in subsequent conflict situations. In this context, we consider the impact of such isolated and unpredictable events as terrorist acts or accidental military incidents which, while probably entailing no risk of conflict in "normal" times, in the altered decision-making environment which would follow a U.S./Soviet military clash, could serve as triggers for wider wars.

### **Direct Linkages**

A number of the first order flashpoints discussed in the previous chapters of this report include an implicit suggestion of an eventual expansion of the conflict area. A number of factors could lead to such a development. It is possible, for example, that conflict in a given area could lead to the destabilization of neighboring nations, and eventually to open conflict and great power involvement, possibly as a result of the breakdown of tacit arrangements which previously had kept the peace. This case has been made by numerous U.S. administrations in pointing out that the existence of insurgent movements in one country makes it more likely that similar movements will develop in other parts of the region in question.

A second possibility is that the great powers themselves, whether acting as principals or merely as supporters of local actors, would find it to their advantage to expand the area of hostilities. This could be done for tactical reasons, as was demonstrated by both sides during the Indo-China conflict. The North Vietnamese found it advantageous to use Laotian territory in their efforts to supply forces in the south; subsequently, the United States chose to expand combat operations into Cambodia in an effort to control the situation in South Vietnam. The area of conflict also could be expanded for strategic purposes, in particular to diminish the effectiveness of the opposing great power by tying down its

forces in other areas, in which case geographically distant areas could be involved. In view of the importance of geographical considerations in the determination of these relationships, our analysis proceeds by region.

*Linkages in East Asia.* A number of factors would link developments in Southeast Asia with events in Northeast Asia, and in particular with events on the Korean Peninsula. Both great powers have interests in both areas. It is important to note, however, that the great powers' presence in the two areas is not symmetrical, a fact which has significant implications for the ways and directions in which conflict might spread. While the Soviet Union has strong military and political ties with both Vietnam and North Korea, the United States has only one strong ally, South Korea, on the Asian mainland. Although the U.S. has additional friends in Southeast Asia which it no doubt would prefer to see remain under sympathetic governments, any U.S. security commitment to these nations is weak, however, and, after the Vietnam experience, must be considered vulnerable to being disavowed, depending on the circumstances of the threat.

In all likelihood, the linkages between these two regions would thus run from south to north. If the crisis began in the north and if the PRC were not involved in the initial situation, thus removing the most obvious tactical link between the two regions, the lack of U.S. positions in Southeast Asia would leave the United States without viable escalatory options, and the Soviets without U.S. targets, in that part of the world. In the event of a crisis beginning in Southeast Asia, however, Soviet or North Korean pressure against the Seoul government or against U.S. troops in Korea could be an effective Soviet response to U.S. initiatives against Vietnam. Such pressure could be made proportional to the perceived threat--U.S. threats against Vietnam or even low-level military actions against Vietnamese forces in Laos or Kampuchea could be met by threats to the Seoul government along with a North Korean military build-up. More active U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, such as direct attacks on Vietnam, particularly if those involved Soviet troops or facilities in that country, could lead to more dire consequences in Korea, from military incidents to an all-out invasion across the demilitarized zone.

The proximity of Korea to the Soviet Far East with its major naval and air facilities, as well as the quantitative advantage of North Korea relative to the South in military strength and the high state of readiness maintained routinely by the North Korean armed forces, might make an extension of conflict into Northeast Asia a potentially attractive move for the U.S.S.R. These same factors suggest that the United States would have little incentive to expand conflict in this direction. Instead, it would be to the advantage of the

United States to seek to localize any conflict within Southeast Asia, thus remaining at a comfortable distance from the principal centers of Soviet power.

The introduction of China as an active participant in a regional conflict would accentuate, but not alter fundamentally, the nature of the linkages between Southeast and Northeast Asia. Once again, conflict would be likely to spread from south to north, and the U.S.S.R. would be the only actor with a clear interest in encouraging such an escalation. Although boundary disputes between China and the U.S.S.R. in Northeast Asia persist, they have been allowed to lie dormant for more than 15 years and there is no reason to believe that they will be revived anytime soon. The prospect of Chinese participation in any U.S./Soviet confrontation which originated in Korea, is even more remote. (Indeed, any Chinese participation in Korea would most likely be in support of North Korea.)

The ongoing enmity between China and Vietnam, however, and the U.S.S.R.'s less impressive military capabilities in the south, make China's participation in anti-Soviet activities in Southeast Asia a distinct possibility, and provide several potential opportunities for joint Sino-American actions in that region. In such cases, the Soviet Union would once again have a clear incentive to make use of its military predominance on the Sino-Soviet border and its naval superiority in Chinese northern coastal waters as a means of bringing pressure on China to halt its actions against Vietnam.

It is possible that such a Soviet move would draw the United States into a situation in which it had not previously been a participant. If Sino-American relations were such that the PRC might be offered U.S. support when faced with a direct Soviet threat, U.S. military assets in Northeast Asia could be deployed in such a way as to contribute to the defense of China's northern border. This could involve initially the commitment of U.S. air assets already present in Korea or Japan to the support of Chinese forces in Manchuria, assuming that the host governments agreed. Such a commitment would most likely be made in advance of any Soviet attack with the primary intention of deterring such a move. The stationing of U.S. air or air defense units within China itself would be a much more serious step, but might be considered, according to the circumstances. If the Soviet Union chose to attack, despite these moves, clashes between U.S. and Soviet units would certainly occur and escalation to a major conflict would be a non-negligible possibility.

Similarly, the presence of vital Chinese and U.S. military assets in Northeast Asia, in conjunction with the significant military advantages provided to the Soviet Union by its military superiority vis-a-vis China and by the availability of North Korean armed forces,



point to Northeast Asia as an important and, indeed, the most likely theater for strategic horizontal escalation by the Soviets against either or both of the other two powers. Such escalation could come in response to any of the more serious U.S./Soviet confrontations in Asia discussed in this report, such as clashes in Iran or Pakistan. Such a move also might be considered by the U.S.S.R. in the event of a confrontation in Europe, but Soviet leaders might in such circumstances prefer to maintain calm in Asia, with the expectation that under such conditions China would stay out of the conflict. In the event of a major Sino/Soviet confrontation in South or Southeast Asia, however, as well as in the case of confrontation between China and such Soviet allies as India, Soviet leaders may again find merit in spreading any European war to Northeast Asia.

Finally, there may be a slim possibility that the Chinese, presumably with U.S. backing, would choose Southeast Asia as an area in which to put pressure on the Soviet Union, by way of attacks on Vietnam, in response to Soviet moves in South Asia, especially if the position of Pakistan, with which the PRC has long had good relations, seemed to be threatened seriously.

*Linkages in Southwestern Asia and the Middle East.* Numerous political and military links exist among the nations which lie between India and the Mediterranean--encompassing the regions which we have defined as South Asia, Southwest Asia, and the Middle East--as well as between those nations and the rest of the world.

The evolution of the military situation in Afghanistan will certainly influence and in turn be affected by developments not only in Pakistan, but also in Iran. In particular, the consolidation of Soviet control over Afghanistan would greatly facilitate any Soviet actions against these two countries, whether in the form of direct intervention or of Soviet support for secessionist movements or political insurgent groups. A deterioration of the Soviet position in Afghanistan, on the other hand, also could lead to hostilities against Pakistan or Iran if the Soviets determined that the only way to stop the flow of assistance from these two countries from reaching the Afghan insurgents was to extend the theater of operations.

Any Soviet move against Pakistan would increase the likelihood of U.S. intervention in the region, which in turn would further increase the probability of an extension of the conflict zone as both great powers sought positions of tactical advantage. In this way, a conflict in Pakistan could spread to include not only Afghanistan, but also Iran and the Gulf States. Expansion of the conflict would be particularly likely if one or both of the powers sought to secure its flank by manipulating political conditions in one of

these countries to its advantage, and succeeded only in destabilizing it. Iran, by virtue of its critical position, would be the most likely target of such actions on the part of both the United States and the Soviet Union. It is not difficult to imagine a situation in which the actions of pro-U.S. and pro-Soviet groups within Iran, backed by covert operations of the great powers, undermined Iranian central authority and led eventually to open factional conflict in Iran. With the powers already confronting each other in Pakistan, the prospect of great power intervention on a large-scale would be a real one.

A similar series of events could follow from a conflict whose sources were in Iran. If the great powers came into conflict in that country, Soviet facilities in Afghanistan, along with any U.S. positions which had been established in Pakistan, would be obvious targets for military action, while the governments of those countries in all probability would be targets of subversive activities backed by the great powers. If great power conflict in Iran persisted, even if it were being conducted indirectly through local allies and surrogate forces, it is thus possible that hostilities would spread into South Asia. Other potential targets would exist if the great powers made use of facilities in their various regional allies, Syria or Iraq in the case of the Soviet Union, and Israel, some Gulf states, Egypt, or Turkey in the case of the United States. The last of these cases, involving as it would a member of NATO, would clearly raise a whole new set of political linkages.

U.S. logistical facilities in Northern Africa could provide more distant, but possibly attractive targets for Soviet escalation if the United States were making use of port facilities in Kenya, Somalia, or the Sudan as transfer points. Such attacks, presumably carried out by forces of Soviet allies in the region--either Ethiopia, Libya, or leftist insurgent groups in other countries, such as the Sudan--could seriously impair the United States' ability to carry out military operations in either Iran or Pakistan.

U.S. naval forces in the Indian Ocean would be an obvious target for Soviet attack in case of a great power confrontation in either Iran or Pakistan. It is likely that these forces would represent a significant proportion of total U.S. military assets in the region, and in particular that they would be the source of considerable U.S. tactical air power. Strikes against U.S. naval units probably would be carried out primarily by land-based aircraft, and would be likely to lead to U.S. retaliation against any Soviet naval forces in the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf area, and possibly against the bases from which the aircraft had originated.

More widespread naval conflict between the great powers also might result. Either side could perceive the logical consequences of any attack on its naval forces anywhere in the world to be a war-at-sea covering the entire globe. Even if it did not intend to adopt such a policy itself, it might fear that the other side would reach such a decision and react accordingly. For that matter, regardless of such assessments, the permissive rules of engagement necessary to enable vulnerable warships to defend themselves could lead to widespread conflict on the high seas once a single naval engagement made the risk of future attacks appear to be significant.

A major great power intervention in a renewed Arab-Israeli conflict also would involve substantial chances of horizontal escalation. Once again, air and naval engagements would provide the most likely source of any expansion of the area of hostilities. This would be especially likely if one or both of the great powers sought to impose an air or sea blockade of their local opponent.

Soviet efforts to resupply Syria by air also would likely include overflights of Turkish and Iranian territory, as during the 1973 war and previous crises. If the United States were actively involved in the conflict, and in particular if Turkish air bases were being used in support of the U.S. effort, an extension of the war to a European area, even if only marginally, could ensue. In such a case, Turkey, might seek to enforce a denial of overflight privileges.

If the Islamic government in Tehran proved less than tractable to Soviet wishes as well, the Soviets could simply choose to ignore its prohibition (which, given Iranian military capacity, might well be feasible) but also the U.S.S.R. could reply by attempting to destabilize the Iranian regime. If such attempts seriously weakened the Tehran government or led to its collapse, we would have another example of a case in which a power vacuum in Iran had been created at a time when the powers, already engaged in conflict nearby, would have both good reason and the means at hand to intervene directly.

As noted, it is also conceivable that Turkey, by virtue of its geographical position, could be drawn into Southwest Asian conflicts. This might follow from a decision by Turkey to permit the United States to use NATO air bases in eastern Turkey to support operations in an Arab/Israeli conflict or, more likely, in the event of a conflict in Iran. The bases could be used to support tactical air units or as transfer points for troops. Soviet attacks on these facilities, given their NATO status, would involve the Atlantic alliance in

the confrontation, if unwittingly, and raise the possibility of a great power confrontation in Europe.

Any large-scale action in the Middle-East/Southwest Asia region almost certainly would involve the forces and facilities of the great powers in Europe in a number of other ways. Some U.S. forces sent to the Middle East in the initial period of a crisis might be drawn from Europe. This in turn could lead to the transfer of American forces based in the continental United States to Europe and possibly to some call-up of reserves to replenish European force levels. It also could lead to an increase in the alert level of all U.S. forces in Europe. Any of these actions could trigger Soviet responses, which would begin with increases in the alert and readiness level of their own forces in Europe and might also involve the mobilization of reserve units and the movement of forces to forward positions on the central front. Similarly, the movement of U.S. and Soviet naval units towards the Mediterranean could result in increased tension and even incidents in the western and northern Atlantic, as well as in the Mediterranean itself, as the two fleets maneuvered for position. Even if neither side intended to initiate a conflict in Europe, large-scale military operations such as these, and the high level of alert that they would require, could be a source of inadvertent incidents and even war.

*Linkages in Europe.* Despite the importance of events in other regions, Europe remains the focus of great power competition. The high degree of integration of the great powers' forces on both sides makes the spreading of conflict from any one portion of Europe to the others likely. Indeed, if hostilities between the great powers in any part of Europe reached the level of sustained military clashes, it is difficult to imagine how the expansion of conflict to the rest of Europe could be avoided.

A U.S./Soviet conflict in Yugoslavia--the most plausible of the European scenarios--almost certainly would lead to a high degree of mobilization on the central front, as both sides sought to protect themselves against surprise attack. In the tense international environment which would certainly exist in the case of ongoing problems in Yugoslavia--even if the great powers were not yet involved directly--both NATO and the forces of the Warsaw Pact would feel it necessary to take precautions, if for no other reason that to deter the other side from exploiting the crisis to make gains in Europe. Such precautionary moves, however, could be misinterpreted by the other side as preparations for a possible attack, thus initiating a vicious circle of increasing mobilization. This process, of course, would be both more likely and more rapid if direct conflict between the powers, even at a relatively low level, were underway in Yugoslavia. In this environment, a risk would exist

that one side or the other would reach the conclusion that the other were about to attack, and decide to preempt.

A similar cycle of perceived threat and response could result if problems in Poland or East Germany led to a significant increase in Soviet military activity in Eastern Europe. NATO commanders might find it prudent militarily to reinforce their positions in response to potentially ambiguous Soviet troop movements, while those very precautions could appear to Soviet decision-makers as preparations for an offensive timed to take advantage of Soviet difficulties in Eastern Europe.

The overwhelming importance of Europe to both of the great powers also makes it the ultimate target for strategic horizontal escalation. The most serious response available to either of the powers short of a nuclear strike on the other's homeland is the threat of action in Europe. The possibility of such threats, and the fear of being caught unprepared by them, tends to lead both of the powers to look to their forces in Europe during any major crisis, regardless of cause or location of the crisis itself.

Europe's northern flank shares with the northern Pacific the distinction of being an area in which the great powers' strategic nuclear assets--Soviet SLBMs in both cases--can be threatened directly by conventional forces. If military moves in Central Europe led the powers to the conclusion that general war might be imminent, a considerable incentive would exist for the United States to reinforce its naval forces in both regions in advance of the actual outbreak of hostilities. The Soviet Union, for its part, would have an even greater incentive to attempt to keep U.S. forces out of the area, leading perhaps to a series of increasingly aggressive naval maneuvers by both powers, and perhaps to incidents, and eventually to large-scale naval conflict.

*Patterns of Linkages.* Figure 1 illustrates the patterns of linkages discussed in this section. Three broad regions--Europe, southwestern Asia and East Asia--are grouped so as to highlight the complex network of linkages within each of these zones. The peripheral nature of Central America and Africa also is emphasized in the figure; Central America is linked only to South Asia, reflecting the structural symmetry between the two and the great powers, while the linkages to Africa are a result only of the possibility of attacks on U.S. facilities in northern Africa. Linkages among the three major regions are few but critical. Both Southwest Asia and the Middle East are linked to Southern Europe, and thus indirectly to the rest of Europe, through the potential role played by Turkey and the NATO air bases located there in the event of Southwest Asian contingencies. The possible role of

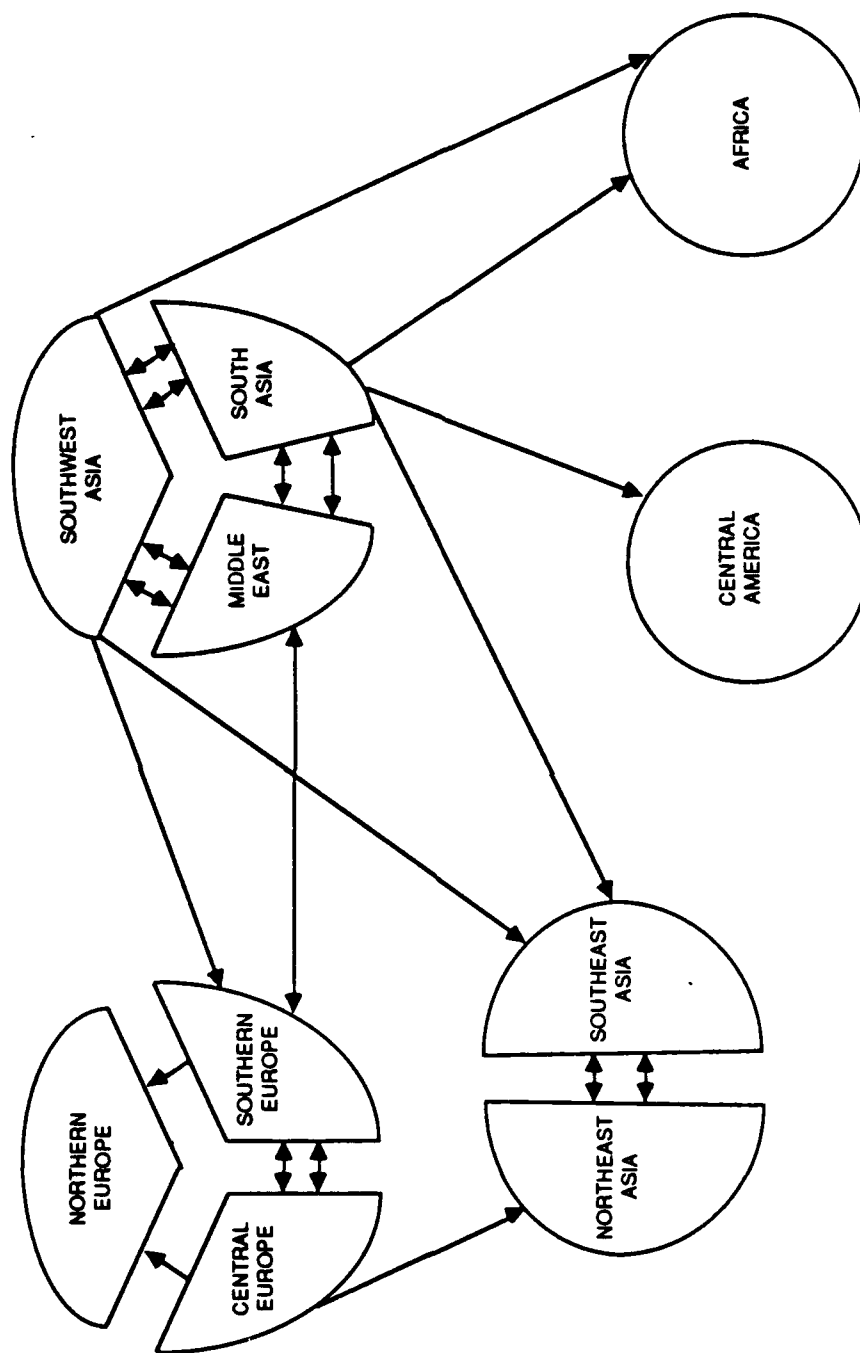


Figure 1. GEOGRAPHIC LINKAGES

China in both South and Southeast Asia provides the principal connection between each of those regions and Northeast Asia. Finally, the possibility of Soviet-backed horizontal escalation of major conflicts into Korea provides a linkage between Northeast Asia and both Central Europe and Southwest Asia.

These linkages are again summarized in Figure 2. A distinction is drawn in the matrix between those tangible linkages resulting from military and logistical considerations, and those less tangible ties which are primarily psychological in nature.

FROM/TO	Northern Europe	Central Europe	Southern Europe	Middle East	Southwest Asia	South Asia	Southeast Asia	Northeast Asia	Africa	Central America
Northern Europe		P	P					M		
Central Europe	P/M		P/M					M		
Southern Europe	P/M	P/M						M		
Middle East			M		P/M	P			M	
Southwest Asia			M	P/M		P/M			M	
South Asia				P	P/M		M	M	M	P
Southeast Asia								P/M		
Northeast Asia							P			
Africa										
Central America						P		P		

Figure 2. TYPES OF LINKAGES

## The Impact of Conflict on Great Power Behavior

As our consideration of great power conflict flashpoints is broadened to include the possibilities of a series of separate conflicts taking place over a period of time, it becomes necessary to reexamine the assumptions which were made originally concerning the basis for great power behavior. The impact of self-perceived foreign policy "victories" and "defeats" on the actions of the great powers in subsequent conflict situations might be particularly important. Would a perception of defeat make the power in question more likely to avoid conflict in a future situation, or would it instead harden its resolve and lead it to seek revenge? What conclusion would be drawn by the opposing power, and how would this affect its propensity to engage in potentially provocative actions? In the case of a self-perceived victory, would the victorious power be more likely to seek additional opportunities to repeat its success, or would it seek to avoid conflict while consolidating its gains? History seems to indicate that questions such as these are critical to understanding future great power behavior.

*"Victories" and "Defeats."* A case can be made for the assertion that both powers have reacted historically to self-perceived victories by seeking out new fields for similar endeavors. Soviet behavior in the 1970s seems to bear this out. Following the achievement of de facto nuclear parity with the United States in the late 1960s, as well as the wherewithal for the first time to project conventional military power to distant regions, and coinciding with a troubled period in U.S. internal politics, the Soviet Union seems to have gained increasing confidence in its ability to employ military forces--both its own advisors and large numbers of Cuban combat troops--in support of its ambitions in the developing world, and particularly in Africa. Soviet success in Angola and Ethiopia followed without triggering a significant U.S. or Western response. This string of successes, however, seems to have come to an end with the intervention into Afghanistan. In this latter case, as we have noted, the Soviet Union misjudged both the military requirements of the situation and the Western reaction to their aggressions.

More recently, U.S. success in El Salvador seems to have encouraged the American government to strengthen its support for other regimes in Central America in an effort to prevent the spread of leftist insurgencies in the region. Moreover, the apparently rising effectiveness of anti-Soviet resistance movements in Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua, and possibly Kampuchea is encouraging the United States to increase its support for other anti-



Soviet insurgencies, a policy which is receiving increasing attention in American political circles.

The foreign policy successes of one power, however, also have an impact on the policy choices of its opponent. Great powers have a definite tendency to react to gains by their opponent by increasing their efforts to prevent further gains. The history of U.S./Soviet relations contains a number of examples of this sort of reaction. The consolidation of Soviet control over Eastern Europe following the Second World War, and the subsequent threat of the expansion of that control to southeastern Europe, led directly to the pronouncement of the Truman Doctrine, which declared U.S. intentions to resist any Soviet move against Greece or Turkey. A similar desire to "draw a line" motivated new U.S. commitments in the Persian Gulf in the early 1980s, following the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. Never before had the United States pledged so explicitly to defend the nations of the region from external aggression.

Closer to home, U.S. policy in Latin America since the 1950s has been strongly influenced by the desire to prevent a repetition of the Soviet victory in Cuba. U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 can be traced back to this desire in large part. It was again echoed in the more recent intervention in Grenada. The "loss" of Nicaragua in 1978 has further encouraged this policy, and is an important additional factor determining current U.S. policy in Latin America.

*The Evolution of Decision Making.* The interaction of these two patterns of behavior shows a clear potential for conflict between the powers. It is possible that foreign policy victories can lead to an increase in the opportunism of the victorious power, leading it to become increasingly willing to seek, exploit, and even create opportunities to extend its influence, while its opponent may be driven to become increasingly aggressive in its defensive posture as it sees its position threatened.

This reasoning has direct relevance to the plausibility of conflict resulting from the flashpoints which were discussed in Chapter II under the heading of "targets of opportunity." Viewed in the context of normal great power relations, we concluded that these flashpoints would be unlikely to produce anything more than isolated incidents involving combat units of the great powers. Likewise, in cases such as Pakistan, Iran, and Yugoslavia, where the potential for direct conflict, once a crisis were underway, seemed to be considerable, the flashpoints in question were held to be less plausible since it was assumed that the powers would seek to avoid open conflict with each other. A different set

of assumptions concerning great power behavior might emerge, however, if we consider the possibility that crises and potential conflicts might not be dealt with in isolation, but rather in a decision-making environment that had been influenced by the results of prior crises. There are two distinct questions to consider here. The first is whether possible changes in great power decision-making following a given conflict are likely to make further conflicts more probable. The second is whether, even if subsequent potential conflict situations were to occur spontaneously, the powers might be more likely to act in such a way as to risk conflict with each other.

There is reason to believe that both possibilities may be true. With respect to the first question, the conclusion hinges on the observation that the great powers have tended to follow-up on victories by repeating successful tactics in different areas. Thus, success in detaching one of the opposing power's vulnerable allies could lead to attempts to detach others, as well as creating additional targets as previously secure areas were made vulnerable. More importantly, success in relatively minor endeavors, if it seemed to indicate a lack of resolve or of capability on the part of the opposing power, could act as an incentive to go after larger prizes, such as important allies of the opposing power--Pakistan is probably the prime example here. Success in a given endeavor also might provide the political or geographical positions necessary to contemplate the extension of influence into regions which were previously out of reach. Consolidation of Soviet control of Afghanistan, for example, would put the U.S.S.R. in a much stronger position to intervene, either directly or indirectly, in either Pakistan or Iran.

This same series of precursors, seen from the point of view of the opposing power, would be likely to lead to a reassessment of its policy with the intent of preventing further defeats. In this way, the United States is probably more likely to intervene in support of Pakistan as a result of the extension of direct Soviet control into Afghanistan than it would have been if an insurgency had developed there in the absence of the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. Great power victories, thus, even if they do not result directly in great power conflict, should be considered to increase the probability of future conflict situations.

A similar analysis can be applied to the second question: The risks deriving from subsequent independent crises. Recent history has clearly demonstrated that even repetitive problems, such as the several Middle East wars or the various incidents between North and South Korea, need not lead to U.S./Soviet confrontation. This might not necessarily be the case, however, if prior events had led one of the powers to consider the strategic situation

to constitute an opportunity for further success at the expense of its adversary, while the other concluded that its position could not permit even the appearance of a new defeat. The mutually reinforcing nature of these two trends is clear. Other things being equal, a major conflict between the great powers will tend to make subsequent conflicts both more probable and more likely to escalate

A final point is worth noting with regard to the impact of conflict on subsequent decision-making. Over the past forty years, the level of U.S./Soviet confrontation has undergone periodic shifts from cold war to de facto peace. Even at the moments of highest tension, however, the powers have avoided any form of direct military conflict. Soviet and American troops have not faced each other in combat since 1921. If combat did occur at some point, ending this implicit sanction against direct violence, that fact itself could affect subsequent attitudes and decisions. The actual results of this change, however, are somewhat ambiguous. If the initial U.S./Soviet combat were contained and did not result in excessive losses for either side, the two powers might be more willing to risk combat in future confrontations. If, however, the first violent confrontation between U.S. and Soviet troops proved catastrophic--if, for example, it led to the use of tactical nuclear weapons or to the loss of major combatants--the stark demonstration of the risks involved in war could serve as an incentive for both sides to limit their risk-taking.

## **PATTERNS FOR LONG-TERM CONFLICT SCENARIOS**

The conclusion which emerges from this discussion is that a conjunction of several distinct events and conditions in all likelihood would be needed to create a plausible scenario for great power conflict, but that the multiple inter-relationships linking autonomous sources of potential conflict could, in certain circumstances, and given appropriate pre-conditions, lead to self-perpetuating chains of events. The initial necessary factors would include both domestic conditions in the two great powers, as they determined their respective international freedom-of-action, and the various international developments which we have discussed as potential sources of threats or opportunities for the powers. The self-perpetuating aspects of the situation are provided by military and political linkages among potential conflict zones, as well as by the evolution of the great power decision-making environment following initial episodes of combat.

Plausible conflict chains must clearly begin with scenarios whose inherent probability is reasonably high in normal circumstances. These "preliminary conflicts" include all of the flashpoints discussed as targets of opportunity, as well as those involving

attempts to detach vulnerable allies of the opposing power and those created by the appearance of power vacuums. Of the flashpoints analyzed in this report, those in Central America, Afghanistan, Iran, and Angola would fit the first definition, while events in Iran, Yugoslavia, and South Africa would be included in the second. Certain serious local conflicts, those which would be triggered by local conditions rather than by great power relations, also should be considered here. A new Arab/Israeli war, or a significant extension of the Iran/Iraq war, are the two principal possibilities in this case. Finally, this group of potential starting conflicts includes situations in which only one great power might be involved, but which would lead to a perceptible change in the overall balance of influence between the two powers, thus substantially contributing to the pre-conditions for further conflict. The most obvious example of this sort of situation would be the overthrow of a friendly government by indigenous forces which resulted in a partial or total loss of great power influence in the country. The replacement of the current regime in the Philippines by a government which would include the participation of strongly anti-American factions would be a clear case of this sort of situation.

The significance of any of these flashpoints would not be that they led directly to great power conflict, but rather that they began the process of modifying great power behavior in such a way as to make conflict possible. Experience seems to indicate that great power behavior tends to return to normal after a certain period of time has elapsed since the last crisis. In order to perpetuate the change in behavior patterns, therefore, it would be necessary for further confrontations to occur within a relatively brief period of time. "Exacerbating conflicts" could occur independently, in the same way as the initial conflict, or they could happen as a direct or indirect result of the first crisis. The various linkages among flashpoints discussed earlier in this chapter suggest numerous ways in which this might take place, not the least of which are the direct military connections from one flashpoint to others. Accordingly, this group includes certain second order conflicts, such as diversionary insurgencies. U.S. involvement in Afghanistan in retaliation for Soviet activities in Central America is the most obvious example of such an action.

The likelihood of a series of exacerbating conflicts taking place in this way would be greatly increased if the policy options of the "losing" power were impaired for internal reasons at the time, such as serious economic difficulties or domestic political matters. If such domestic constraints proved permanent, such a situation would probably not lead to conflict, but rather to a long term redefinition of the relative influence of the two powers. The danger of conflict might be quite high, however, if the aggressor power misjudged its

opponent's position and failed to perceive an internal development, a shift in political alignments, for example, which portended a significant change in that country's ability and willingness to resist further defeats. Significantly, such a change might be caused, at least in part, by the very series of defeats in question.

At this point, following a series of limited conflicts and a shift, which might be gradual or quite sudden, in the decision-making environment of one or both of the great powers, it is reasonable to search for ways in which a more extensive war might actually begin. These can be thought of as "trigger conflicts". The various flashpoints involving low-level or indirect conflict are probably no longer relevant here. The trigger to war could be provided by an independent event such as the appearance of a power vacuum in a critical area or a serious conflict between major great power allies, or it could in fact be a great power action itself, such as a high-level horizontal escalation; a Soviet-backed attack against U.S. forces in Korea would be a key example of such an action. Finally, events which would be insignificant at other times, such as accidental incidents involving military units of the two sides or major terrorist incidents, would both be more likely to occur and more likely to lead to conflict in times of extreme tension. History seems to indicate that actual war-starting events are often quite trivial. The important thing is the sum of the events and the conditions which led up to them.

**PART TWO**

**GLOBAL SCENARIOS**

## PROLOGUE

The preceding analyses of plausible regional flashpoints for U.S./Soviet conflict and of the interrelationships among them provide the building blocks necessary to construct hypothetical scenarios that could lead to a global war between the great powers. By describing alternative directions in which the key relationships that structure the international environment could evolve, by stretching those trends over alternative periods of time, and by integrating the regional flashpoints into appropriate international contexts, we have constructed a set of seven scenarios, each of which plausibly could terminate with a major, worldwide, U.S./Soviet war.

The regional flashpoints provide a general chronological framework for the global scenarios by identifying those specific regional conflicts which would be most plausible at various points in the future. The analysis in Chapter II suggests ways in which these various isolated conflicts might fit into the larger pattern of U.S./Soviet competition, as well as the impact of the ongoing great power competition on the evolution of the regional conflicts themselves. The linkages among flashpoints described in Chapter III provide the logical framework which ensures the internal cohesion of each global scenario. Together, these elements enable us to create plausible chains of events, subject to the defining assumptions about the international environment specified at the outset of each scenario.

The assumptions which define the international context for each scenario were derived in large part from a prior IDA study, *Alternative Strategic Environments*, (P-1785), completed in 1984 for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This study analyzed identifiable political, economic, and technological trends and suggested a number of "possible futures" resulting from plausible combinations of these. In adapting these alternative environments for this study, we concentrated on specifying economic and political conditions. Descriptions of technological and scientific advances are given only when these have an overwhelming political impact (the development and deployment of strategic defenses, for example). In other cases, these questions are left open; our scenarios can accordingly be employed to explore the ramifications of specific military or other technological innovations in a variety of political environments.

Each scenario contains a detailed description of the evolution of economic and political policy and conditions in the two great powers and in their principal allies. In addition, since it is impossible to define the options available to the great powers, as well as the limitations on their freedom of action, without taking into consideration the actions and interest of third countries, an effort is made in all of the scenarios to outline the evolution of policy and conditions in all key states and regions of the world.

Table 4, below, summarizes the fundamental assumptions for each of the seven scenarios. In this table, the characterization of economic conditions and alliance relations are made from the point of view of the nation or nations in question. "Positive" political or economic trends in the U.S.S.R., thus, imply developments which would be considered favorable by the Soviet government. The descriptor "Third World Trends," for which only a single value is given for each scenario, is always presented from the point of view of the United States. "Positive" trends in this case imply that key third world states are seeking positive relations with the United States while pro-Soviet groups and governments are generally on the defensive.

As illustrated in Table 4, the scenarios are grouped into three sets, which are defined according to how long the international environment is permitted to evolve before events are brought to a point at which major U.S./Soviet conflict appears plausible. The three groups envision global war in 1995, 2000, and 2005, respectively. The greater the elapsed time before the eruption of the war, the more radical the changes within the international environment which would be feasible. Moreover, in terms of the utilization of these scenarios, the greater the permissible changes in U.S. and Soviet forces, as well as in their technical capabilities.

Within each set of scenarios, international circumstances are arranged to permit contrasting situations. Thus, for example, scenarios Alpha and Beta envision a major U.S./Soviet conflict in 1995. This relatively close date means that the international environment in both scenarios is likely to incorporate only modest changes from current circumstances. In this context, Scenario Alpha examines a plausible near-term future in which the United States is relatively more successful than the Soviet Union in dealing with current international events, while scenario Beta considers the opposite circumstance. In both scenarios, the events which lead eventually to war originate largely in southwest Asia and adjacent regions, the so called "arc of conflict" which was identified in Chapter 1 as holding the greatest number of potential sources of U.S./Soviet conflict in the near term.



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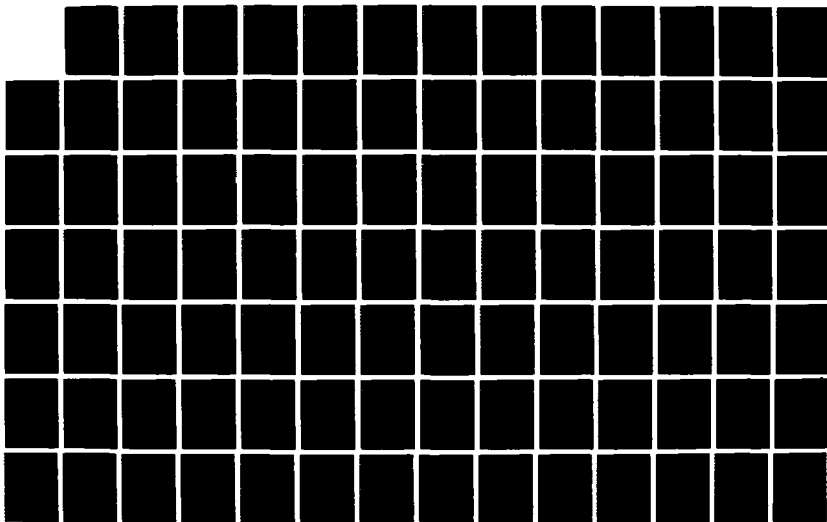
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**Table 4. Characteristics of Alternative Environments**

Dimension	Scenario	
	Alpha	Beta
Year of Conflict:	1995	1995
Domestic, Economic and Political Trends in: U.S. U.S.S.R.	positive moderately negative	moderately negative positive
Alliance Relations: U.S./NATO U.S./Asia U.S.S.R./WTO	good good moderate deterioration	moderate deterioration positive positive
Third World Trends:	positive	negative

Dimension	Scenario	
	Gamma	Delta
Year of Conflict:	2000	2000
Domestic, Economic and Political Trends in: U.S. U.S.S.R.	positive negative	inconsistent moderately positive
Alliance Relations: U.S./NATO U.S./Asia U.S.S.R./WTO	diminished excellent poor	stable diminished stable
Third World Trends:	positive	negative

Dimension	Scenario		
	Epsilon	Zeta	Omega
Year of Conflict:	2005	2005	2005
Domestic, Economic and Political Trends in: U.S. U.S.S.R.	negative negative	positive negative	positive positive
Alliance Relations: U.S./NATO U.S./Asia U.S.S.R./WTO	dissolved fractured difficult	strengthened strengthened critical	dissolved strengthened good
Third World Trends:	negative	positive	chaotic

The second pair of scenarios, Gamma and Delta, postulate sequences of events which could lead to war in the year 2000. The 13 years between the current time and that date is sufficient to imagine relatively major realignments among the nations of the world (consider the change in China's alignment between the late 1950s and early 1970s, for example), and the two scenarios accordingly postulate such changes in Western Europe and East Asia, respectively. The flashpoints which lead eventually to war were chosen to highlight the military consequences of such changes in major international relationships.

In the third group of scenarios, Epsilon, Zeta, and Omega, global war does not begin until the year 2005, sufficient time to imagine truly revolutionary changes in world affairs. Scenario Epsilon considers the effects on U.S. security interests and military capabilities of the emergence during the period of a true multi-polar international system. Zeta postulates a scenario in which a prolonged deterioration of the Soviet Union's international and domestic situation culminates in open revolts in Eastern Europe and within the U.S.S.R. itself. Omega postulates major changes in the Middle East and East Asia. These long-term scenarios can also be used to explore the possible ramifications of major technological advances, in particular the deployment of extensive strategic defense systems by one or both powers. In order to allow readers of this study to consider the greatest number of possible alternatives, the endings of scenarios Epsilon and Zeta are intentionally left somewhat more ambiguous than those of the others. In each case, U.S. leaders must decide on an appropriate response to Soviet aggression in an unstable environment.

The seven scenarios--Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, Zeta, and Omega--are described in Chapters IV through X below. Each scenario specifies the evolution of the international environment until the point at which the global conflict seems likely to break out. They do not specify the outcome of the conflict, nor the strategy adopted by each side. In particular, none of the scenarios necessarily would terminate with a major nuclear exchange between the great powers, although the circumstances specified in each of the seven would plausibly support such an option. Several of the scenarios do specify limited uses of nuclear weapons prior to the major conflict, in part to make a major exchange more plausible.

The outcome of the conflict postulated in each scenario would depend upon Soviet and U.S. force structure decisions prior to the outbreak of war--which also are outlined only generally in the scenarios--as well as the strategic and tactical decisions made during the course of the fighting. As such, the scenarios can be used both to evaluate alternative

military postures (in varying threat environments), as well as to test the effects of broad strategies, in a variety of plausible international circumstances.

It of course would be feasible to describe a much larger number of alternative scenarios, each constructed by integrating sequences of regional conflict flashpoints into alternative international contexts. Such scenarios can be designed to facilitate the evaluation of specific questions concerning the consequences of different strategic choices, force structures, threat environments, or international political trends. The current set of seven scenarios provide a wide-ranging base for such studies in themselves, however, and can be refined as desired by military planners and analysts.

#### IV. SCENARIO ALPHA: SOVIET WEAKNESS LEADS TO WAR IN 1995

Our first scenario describes how a major U.S./Soviet conflict could develop during a period of relative Soviet weakness vis-a-vis the United States. The international environment projected for this scenario conforms closely to that developed as the "Surprise-Free Case" in the IDA study *Alternative Strategic Environments* (P-1785). It represents a straight line extrapolation of current conditions. This projection of the international environment, however, should not be considered a forecast of the most likely international developments; it is only one possible end-point of the current train of events. It is significant, however, that even within an international environment similar to that existing today, it is feasible to imagine the development of a major U.S./Soviet military conflict within ten years.

In the United States and the countries of western Europe, the period of the late 1980s and early 1990s was characterized by a continuing economic recovery, made possible in large part by the drop in energy prices which took place in 1985-87, as well as by the increasing coordination of national economic policies among the major industrialized countries. This broad economic trend encouraged political stability and contributed substantially to the gradual improvement of the international position of all the Western nations. The Soviet Union and its East European allies, on the other hand, found themselves in the grip of a worsening economic situation, as the Soviet economy proved unresponsive to the modest reforms initiated by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.

In Asia, relations between the United States and its allies remained good, political and security imperatives proving more powerful than the problems of economic competition evident in the mid-1980s. The leaders of the People's Republic of China kept their country on the pragmatic course which had been set by Deng Xiaoping, including the cautious opening to the West which had begun under his leadership. Southwest Asia and the Middle East remained areas of considerable tension, but no dramatic developments took place there. Indeed, a few encouraging trends could be discerned, particularly in the Arab world, as such moderate governments as Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia increasingly

sought to cooperate with one another and to improve relations with the West. Only in Central America did the United States find itself unable to make progress, as that region's endemic poverty and political instability continued to provide a fertile base for leftist insurgencies supported by Cuba and other Communist nations.

In the winter of 1991, the U.S.S.R. attempted to regain the international initiative by escalating its involvement in Central America. This involved an increase in Soviet aid to Nicaragua and to insurgent groups as well as a more visible Soviet military presence in the region. The U.S. responded with commando attacks on Soviet facilities inside Nicaragua, forcing the U.S.S.R. to withdraw its forces from that nation. This set-back led the Soviet government to support a Syrian offensive against Israel, in hope of reversing the trend toward U.S. gains in the Middle East. When the Syrian attack was defeated in the spring of 1992, however, both great powers ended up with ground and tactical air units deployed in the region along with beefed-up naval forces. Incidents between U.S. and Soviet maritime forces followed in the Mediterranean.

Over the course of 1993, various Soviet actions in the Middle East, born increasingly of desperation, antagonized both Iraq and Turkey, resulting eventually in denial of the airspace of both countries, as well as the Turkish Straits to Soviet military cargoes. Seeking means of supporting its forces in the Middle East, the U.S.S.R. gained increased access to Yugoslav ports and other facilities in 1994 in return for security assistance and advisors to support the government of Yugoslavia's efforts to control growing dissident movements in Slovenia and Croatia. The Soviet intervention, however, led only to the further destabilization of Yugoslavia and, eventually, to open civil war in 1995. Over a twelve month period, Soviet and NATO forces were drawn increasingly into the Yugoslav civil war and, by June 1995, there were frequent air and sea incidents, as well as exchanges of fire between their ground forces. The escalating conflict in Yugoslavia then led to mobilization and warfare on the central front.

The major events leading up to the 1995 confrontation are set out in the chronology below.

#### CHRONOLOGY

1985-87	Fall in oil prices--strong economic recovery in Western nations.
1987	Crisis in Cyprus--U.S. backs Turkey.
1988	Greek forces and facilities withdrawn from NATO. Death of Syrian president Hafez el Assad; succession of his brother Rifa'ad.
1989	Peaceful transfer of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty; death of Deng Xiaoping.

1988-90 U.S.-backed escalation of insurgencies in Afghanistan and Angola; continued left wing insurgent successes in Central America, despite increased U.S. participation in government military efforts

1990 Death of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

1990-91 Iran/Iraq winds down and eventually ends without formal declarations.  
Covert Soviet support for Kurds in Iraq; Soviet diplomatic/political offensive to improve relations with Iran.

1991

May: Large numbers of Soviet aircraft and submarines in the Caribbean.

2 June: MiG-23 aircraft spotted in Nicaragua.

June: Soviet long-range aircraft and nuclear submarines call at Nicaraguan bases.

July: Soviet aircraft carry out reconnaissance of U.S. West Coast from Nicaraguan bases.

Work begun to install submarine-support facilities in Nicaraguan ports.

August: Abortive attacks on Soviet facilities by Nicaraguan "Contras."

Aug/Sept: Joint U.S.-Honduran maneuvers on Nicaraguan border.

Sept: U.S. naval exercises in Caribbean and eastern Pacific.

6 Sept: Unfinished submarine repair facilities in Nicaragua, destroyed in covert U.S. action.

9 Sept: U.S. special forces destroy two Soviet aircraft on the ground at Nicaraguan base.

10 Sept: Remaining Soviet aircraft in Nicaragua return to Cuba.

Fall/ Winter Increasing unrest and worsening economic conditions in Yugoslavia.

Winter Secret Soviet/Syrian negotiations.

1992

20 Mar: Syrian attack against Israel.

21 Mar: Syrian missiles hit Israeli cities--Israeli aircraft retaliate with raids on Damascus.

23 Mar: U.S.S.R. calls for a cease-fire in the Middle East.

24 Mar: Soviet airlift to Syria; at U.S. request, Turkey denies Soviet overflight rights.

March Soviet/Turkish air incidents.

27 Mar: Turkey closes Straits to Soviet warships.

2 Apr: Soviet troops deployed to Syria.

3 Apr: Soviet aircraft strike inside Israel.

4 Apr: First direct U.S./Soviet combat (air clashes over Israel).

5 Apr: U.S. and U.S.S.R. impose cease-fire in the Middle East.

April: U.S. ground and air units deployed to Israel.

Spring: Anti-government demonstrations in Yugoslavia.

May: Martial law declared in Yugoslavia.

July: Israel withdraws from advanced positions inside Syria.

Fall: Resurgence of dissident forces in Syria--Soviet presence grows to three divisions.

Fall: Israeli/Soviet air clashes over Syria and Lebanon.

1993

Jan: Iraq breaks with Soviet Union and denies overflight to Soviet aircraft.



Spring/Summer: Soviet-backed Kurdish insurgencies in northern Iraq.

Fall: Kurdish uprisings spread to Turkey--Turkish/Syrian border incidents.

14 Oct: Soviet participation in Syrian/Turkish conflict discovered--Turkey closes Straits to all Soviet shipping.

5 Nov: NATO Council backs Turkish action; Soviets do not challenge.

#### 1994

Jan: Student demonstrators shot in Zagreb.

Winter: Increasingly serious U.S./Soviet air/sea clashes in the Mediterranean.  
Secret Soviet/Yugoslav negotiations.

22 May: Soviets granted extensive basing/transit rights in Yugoslavia.

Spring: Yugoslav insurgents attack Soviet facilities.

2 July: Peoples Front for the Freedom of Croatia and Slovenia (PFFCS) formed.

Fall: U.S. provides covert aid to PFFCS.

#### 1995

Winter: PFFCS attacks are increasingly successful.  
Soviet build-up in Yugoslavia; U.S./Soviet air/sea clashes in the Adriatic.

29 April: Slovenia and Croatia declare independence.

1 May: NATO recognizes independence of Slovenia and Croatia.

May: Mass uprisings in Slovenia and Croatia.  
Intensive Soviet air attacks against Slovenia and Croatia; NATO sends military aid to the independent republics.

14 May: U.S. president warns that NATO will intervene to defend Slovenia and Croatia.

20 May: Soviets invade Slovenia and Croatia.

24 May: French, British, and U.S. forces intervene in Yugoslav war.

1 June: Soviets mobilize in Eastern Europe.

4 June: NATO disperses tactical nuclear weapons.

5 June: Soviet offensive on central front.

### EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM, 1986-1991

In order to understand the events leading up to the NATO/Warsaw Pact conflict in 1995, it is necessary to appreciate the international situation in the years preceding the crisis.

#### The United States

In the United States, the years 1986 through 1988 were dominated by the problem of the federal budget deficit. Although neither the Executive Branch nor the Congress was able to provide a credible initiative, in the end a renewed increase in economic growth defused the deficit crisis. This economic upturn was made possible initially by

stabilization of the price of crude oil at relatively low levels; the spurt of growth which followed boosted tax revenues while restraint in expenditures was continued. Accordingly, federal borrowing requirements were lowered and U.S. interest rates fell significantly. This in turn ensured the success of efforts begun in 1985 to bring about a general realignment and stabilization of the currencies of the principal industrial countries. The realignment ended the period of overvaluation which the U.S. dollar had suffered since 1981 and, by allowing the foreign trade balance to right itself gradually, contributed to a general prosperity whose effects continued to be felt long after the direct impact of the decline in oil prices had been absorbed. From 1988 onwards, the more permissive fiscal environment permitted U.S. government spending to keep pace with the modest rate of inflation, and modest real growth in defense expenditures was resumed.

The administration which came into office in 1989 profited in large measure from the popularity of the outgoing Reagan administration. It pledged to continue the free-market-oriented economic policies of its predecessor, and to make increasing use of the economic and political influence of the United States to further democratic causes throughout the world. The policy was regarded widely to be aimed at Central America, but it also had clear implications for U.S. actions in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. At the same time, relations with the U.S.S.R. remained frozen as they had been since the 1986 Reykjavic summit. Arms talks continued, but to no end, and the existing arms control regime continued to deteriorate. Rhetoric alternated between harsh accusations and indifference.

Accordingly, in the last years of the 1980s, the United States became progressively more active in its support of anti-Communist movements and insurgencies in the third world. Military assistance was provided not only to the Mujaheddin in Afghanistan and the "Contras" in Nicaragua, but also to UNITA in Angola, the FMLA in Mozambique, and non-communist forces in Kampuchea. The aid was utilized with the help of U.S. military advisors, who were based in neighboring nations, but who sometimes accompanied their trainees across the border. Aid to U.S.-backed governments in such potentially troubled areas as El Salvador, Honduras, and Pakistan also was increased. The new administration also reaffirmed and revitalized the build-up of U.S. military forces that had begun under President Reagan.

## **West European Countries**

The basic factors which influenced the growth of the American economy were felt also in Europe although, with the exception of the Federal Republic of Germany, growth rates in Europe did not match those in the United States. Significantly, by eliminating the threat of U.S. protectionism, removal of the exchange rate imbalances made possible the establishment of more cooperative U.S.-European relations. Common efforts on the exchange rate problem also resulted by 1990, in significant progress towards the coordination of economic policies among the governments of the European Economic Community.

The late 1980s also witnessed the decline of extremist political movements in Western Europe as the emerging economic policy consensus resulted in greater political stability. In the U.K., a new Conservative prime minister governed at the head of a coalition of Tories and Social Democrats. The new government gained considerable public support by moderating some of Mrs. Thatcher's more extreme economic and social policies, while maintaining a basic free-market orientation. The conservative Christian Democratic Party also retained control of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany, although it continued to rule in coalition with the Free Democrats. In France, the election of a popular president from the center-left brought a period of increased political stability, and hastened the decline of the French Communist Party, which had begun with the election of Francois Mitterrand to the presidency in 1981. The growth of the extreme right in France, which had been feared in the mid-1980s, proved ephemeral.

Only in southern Europe did NATO encounter difficulties. An upsurge in violence between the Greek and Turkish populations of Cyprus in 1987 caused long standing antagonisms between the Greek and Turkish governments to resurface. Both countries sought the support of NATO and the United States; each accused the other of supporting Cypriot extremists. The United States attempted to maintain an evenhanded position, but this was seen as a shift from the generally pro-Greek orientation of U.S. administrations in previous crises. The Socialist government of Greece responded by curtailing its few remaining ties to NATO. The Greek prime minister announced in early 1988 that Greek forces would be withdrawn from NATO's integrated command and that all NATO bases on Greek soil would be manned exclusively by Greek forces beginning in 1989. Faced with this loss of key facilities, the U.S. administration, which had never felt comfortable with Mr. Papandreou's leftist rhetoric anyway, sought even closer ties with the Turkish government; military aid to Turkey was increased. Eventually, the United States was able

to negotiate more liberal arrangements for access to Turkish bases and facilities. Greece, for its part, remained in NATO officially, but its armed forces and military facilities no longer participated in the alliance's exercises and joint planning.

### **The U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe**

Events in the Soviet Union and the nations of Eastern Europe during this period were far less positive. A number of factors ensured that the economic modernization measures introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev had little impact; eventually they had to be abandoned. The internal rigidities of the Soviet system played a large role in this failure, as the General Secretary soon found that it was impossible to root out the vested interests and institutional inertia which dominated the Soviet system; external factors also contributed to the failure in the late 1980s.

The precipitous fall in energy prices which proved such a blessing to Western economies had the opposite effect on the Soviet Union; it greatly reduced Soviet revenues from the export of oil, the U.S.S.R.'s single largest source of hard currency. The availability of cheap and plentiful oil also reduced the demand for Soviet natural gas, thus exacerbating the hard currency shortage. These problems greatly reduced the U.S.S.R.'s ability to finance the purchase of industrial technologies, which both Soviet and Western planners agreed was the key to any modernization of Soviet industry. The popularity of conservative governments in the U.S. and key West European nations made possible the strengthening of relatively tight controls on exports of advanced technologies in any event. Continued shortfalls in Soviet agricultural production ensured that food imports would continue to require a significant proportion of Soviet hard currency assets, reducing further the means available for industrial modernization.

This situation resulted in a steady erosion of the economic leverage of the Soviet Union vis-a-vis the nations of Eastern Europe. The importance of Soviet energy supplies diminished as energy from other sources became available at affordable prices. The governments of Eastern Europe, badly in need of credits and technology to modernize their own economies, increasingly found it more advantageous to deal directly with the West than to coordinate their policies with the Soviet Union. Fearing the political consequences of economic hardship in Eastern Europe, Soviet leaders were reluctant to dispute this tendency and interfered only rarely--when their authority was challenged in a particularly public fashion.

Despite this restraint, political trends in Eastern Europe proceeded adversely from a Soviet perspective. Growing nationalist sentiments contributed measurably to the desire of East European governments to distance themselves from Soviet policies. None of this, however, could challenge the central fact of East European politics--the overwhelming presence of Soviet military power and its roles not only as the fundamental guarantor of the status quo but, ultimately, the force behind the very existence of those same East European governments which sought greater independence. Soviet military power had created Communist regimes in Eastern Europe; Soviet military power could depose them. Most troubling for the ostensibly neo-nationalist governments of Eastern Europe, a sudden withdrawal of Soviet military power would probably lead to their overthrow at the hands of their own populations. These problems were felt in varying degrees throughout the eastern bloc. They were especially severe, however, in Poland, where economic collapse had become permanent and large sections of the population remained in incipient rebellion, and in East Germany, where increasingly close contacts with the West had intensified the advance of German nationalism.

The economic problems which beset the nations of the Warsaw Pact were felt also in Yugoslavia where they compounded the difficulties of an increasingly chaotic political system. Cooperation among Yugoslavia's ethnically diverse constituent republics had never been easy; the growing divergence of economic interests made it increasingly difficult.

The northern republics of Slovenia and Croatia became increasingly oriented to the West. As the most economically advanced region of Yugoslavia, they were able to maintain profitable trade relations with the nations of western Europe. Human contacts also grew as Western tourists flocked to Dalmatia in increasing numbers, while Slovenian and Croatian guest workers again found employment in the revived economies of Germany, Austria, and Italy. This economic orientation was increasingly at odds with that of Serbia, which continued to emphasize contacts with the East and to remain heavily dependent on large, government-negotiated contracts with the centrally planned economies of the Soviet bloc. In the north, the government in Belgrade came to be seen increasingly as a handicap to local prosperity, withdrawing wealth in the form of taxation and returning little of value. These feelings, prevalent at high levels in the republic governments, joined with the permanent ethnic conflicts that had long separated Serbia from Croatia and Slovenia, to create an increasingly explosive situation. The late 1980s saw an upsurge in anti-Serbian terrorism carried out by self-proclaimed Croatian independence movements both within Yugoslavia and abroad. Such activities found no public sympathy at official

levels within Croatia, but rumors persisted that the republic government was not devoid of individuals sympathetic to the extremists and that, as a result, they enjoyed a certain freedom of action within the republic.

Trouble also brewed in the impoverished southern regions of Yugoslavia. There, conflict between the central government and the Albanian and Macedonian minorities was of long standing. The Belgrade government was able to maintain a minimum level of cohesion by providing considerable economic aid to these areas. As the general economic situation deteriorated, however, the level of federal transfers diminished, leading to increasingly open anti-government feelings. This situation also had repercussions in Serbia itself, where there was considerable resistance to diverting economic resources to the ethnically foreign south.

All these developments put increasing strain on Yugoslavia's cumbersome federal system. By 1990, centralized economic decision-making was essentially at a standstill, while coordination in the political sphere was difficult at best. The only strong centralizing influence, other than that of the Serbian elite, came from certain elements of the military who saw the preservation of Yugoslav unity, by which they meant the strength of the central government, as the only way to insure the survival of the nation.

### **The Middle East and Southwest Asia**

Developments in the Middle East through the late 1980s were generally favorable to the United States and its allies. The moderate Arab states, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the smaller Gulf States, continued to align themselves closely with the West. They found it possible increasingly to cooperate with one another, and with moderate elements among the Palestinians and in such nations as Iraq. In Israel, a succession of governments made slow progress towards resolving the critical economic problems which had gripped that country earlier in the decade. Little overt progress was made towards resolving the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, but a de facto peace between Israel and Jordan reinforced the tentative normalization of relations between Israel and Egypt.

Among Israel's immediate neighbors, only Syria remained actively hostile. The Damascus regime, however, found itself increasingly isolated in the Arab world as a result not only of its continued militancy versus Israel, but also of its close relationship with the Soviet Union. Only Libya, still under the erratic leadership of Colonel Qadafi, remained a second overt Soviet ally in the region. Syria maintained its hegemony over Lebanon, but this position was not uncontested. The Syrians were supported strongly by Druze and

Sunni factions, and had at least the tacit support of the main Shi'ite militia, Amal. Radical elements in both the Shi'ite and Christian communities, however, maintained armed, confrontationalist postures against both their local enemies and Syrian "peace-keeping" forces. The Syrian government also had to contend with domestic opponents, largely Islamic fundamentalist groups. This problem became more acute following the death of President Hafez el-Assad in 1988. The late president's brother, who had previously secured control of the ruling Syrian Ba'ath party and of the security organizations created by Assad, succeeded in imposing himself as the next president, a move made possible by the strong backing of the army. The Syrian armed forces, strongly pro-Soviet and increasingly confident in their military capabilities, thus reasserted their dominant position in Syrian decision-making. One immediate result was a much harder line against internal opponents, and, in particular, against radical fundamentalist groups. Although Iran and Syria maintained ostensibly good relations, it was believed generally that these groups received considerable Iranian backing, as did their counterparts in Lebanon. As it became apparent that the crackdown by the Syrian military was having results, relations between Syria and Iran cooled considerably. At the same time, occasional incidents between Syrian and Israeli ground and air units, both in southern Lebanon and on the Golan border, provided a continuing reminder that the uneasy peace between these two neighbors was fragile.

Although the Palestinian problem remained unresolved, its complexion had evolved somewhat. The Palestine Liberation Organization essentially disappeared as an independent international actor, although Yasser Arafat and a skeletal organization retained titular leadership over the movement. In practice, the Palestinians were split between pro-Jordanian and pro-Syrian factions. The former was by far the largest, including the overwhelming majority of Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as many Palestinians living in other Arab countries. The pro-Syrian faction, however, was more visible internationally. Both groups maintained active terrorist campaigns against Israeli and Western targets.

The war between Iran and Iraq gradually ended in 1990. Following the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini early in the year, the government in Tehran continued to be dominated by fundamentalist Shi'ite religious leaders, but the intransigent foreign policy of the Khomeini era was modified somewhat. The serious internal economic problems which had been neglected through much of the decade required urgent attention. Although it did not enter into official negotiations with Iraq, the new Iranian government conducted no offensive actions on the Iraqi border and, more significantly, withdrew the large numbers

of "revolutionary guards" which had borne the brunt of previous battles. Left in the hands of the regular army, military activity on the front dwindled and de facto cease-fires emerged; the two sides' positions corresponded roughly to the pre-war boundaries of the two countries. Only in the northern, predominantly Kurdish regions did sporadic fighting continue, but this was carried on by Kurdish separatist groups. Iraq, for its part, diminished its air attacks against Iranian targets and against ships in the Gulf. By the end of 1990 these events were a thing of the past.

Freed from the burdens of war, the Iraqi government sought to rebuild its economy. In this effort, Baghdad continued the policy of cooperation with the moderate states of the Arabian peninsula whose financial assistance had enabled it to survive the war. Iraq began to distance itself publicly from the Soviet Union, primarily because its need was no longer for military equipment, which the Soviets had long provided predominantly, but rather for economic and technological assistance, which was better obtained from the West with the financial support of moderate Arab states. A further reason for the cooling of Soviet-Iraqi relations was the persistent suspicion on the part of the Baghdad government that Soviet, as well as Iranian, assistance was reaching the Kurdish rebels in the northern part of the country. Finally, Iraq was increasingly worried about the close relationship between the U.S.S.R. and Syria, a country with which Iraq remained on hostile terms, as well as with growing Soviet efforts to woo Iran.

### **South Asia**

The war in Afghanistan continued into the early 1990s much as it had throughout the 1980s. Operating from sanctuaries in Pakistan and Iran, rebel groups harassed the Soviet occupying army and inflicted a steady stream of casualties. An increase in the quality and quantity of covert U.S. support for the insurgents, in particular the introduction of man-portable anti-aircraft missiles, which greatly reduced the effectiveness of Soviet helicopters, permitted the Mujaheddin to extend their activities from the traditional mountain strongholds to the plains and deserts of southern and western Afghanistan. This facilitated links between the rebels and Iran, to the west, while limiting Soviet contact with Baluchistan, to the south.

The government of President Zia al-Haq remained firmly in control of Pakistan. A limited freedom was accorded to political parties, and local political activity was allowed to resume. Relations between Pakistan and India showed signs of gradual improvement as each side toned down its rhetoric and made concrete efforts to cooperate on local matters.



Outstanding border disputes between the two countries, however, remained no closer to resolution than before.

### **East Asia**

Relations between the United States and its allies in East Asia had gone through a difficult period in the mid-1980s as controversy over trade issues assumed serious proportions. In the improved economic conditions which characterized the latter part of the decade, however, multilateral trade negotiations were able to make modest gains in pursuit of a generally acceptable international trade regime. Most importantly, the new agreements, which were ratified in 1989, defused the protectionist sentiments which had been evident among U.S. lawmakers.

The People's Republic of China continued with its long-term policy of gradual economic liberalization and opening to the West, although progress in this direction slowed somewhat after the death of Deng Xiaoping in 1989. China's relations with the Soviet Union remained decidedly cool. The smooth P.R.C. assumption of sovereignty in Hong Kong, which took place earlier that same year, and the initially successful integration of the city into China as a "Special Region," sparked hope that a peaceful resolution might eventually be found to the question of the status of Taiwan. Although no concrete progress was actually made on this issue, the positive outlook facilitated the continued improvement of Sino-American relations.

A new generation of leaders came into power in Vietnam in the late 1980s. Although little was known about the individuals in question, their early actions seemed to indicate that they might be seeking improved relations with their neighbors, especially China, as well as with the prosperous nations of East and Southeast Asia, in the hopes of reviving their still-shattered economy. Although the occupation of Kampuchea and Laos continued, Vietnamese troops in these countries were withdrawn from the vicinity of the Thai border in a clear effort to reduce incidents. Troop levels on Vietnam's northern border also were reduced somewhat.

### **Africa**

The general situation of Africa, with but a few exceptions, remained in unhappy contrast with the generally positive evolution of other parts of the world. Serious economic problems persisted in large areas of the continent, particularly in the Sahellian zone.

Violent conflicts continued in Ethiopia, Chad, and the Western Sahara; coups remained an endemic problem.

Southern Africa remained beset by a multitude of problems. A nominally independent government existed in Namibia, but this South African-backed state lacked international recognition and local credibility. Civil wars continued in Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Violence continued to escalate in South Africa itself, despite increased repression from an increasingly militant regime. Ironically, the troubles at home led to the redeployment of South African forces from Namibia, and ended their active support of UNITA, which, in turn, made U.S. support of that organization less provocative to other African states than it otherwise might have been.

In the Angolan civil war, U.S. assistance enabled UNITA to alter both the geographical area and the scope of its actions. The introduction of first-quality U.S. weapons into UNITA's arsenal allowed it to challenge the air force of the Luanda government and its Cuban allies more directly. By 1988, the area under UNITA's control included perhaps two-fifths of Angola, namely the southern and western areas inhabited primarily by Ovimbundu populations. This ethnic factor was critical; the Ovimbundu, greatly under-represented in Angola's central government, had provided the bulk of UNITA's support since the days before Angola's independence. In these areas, UNITA's rule was widely accepted. As U.S. assistance began to rebuild southern Angola's war-shattered economy, UNITA's popularity in these areas improved further.

UNITA enjoyed little or no popular support in the center and north of Angola, however, the richest part of the country. While its control was increasingly uncontested in its "natural" zone of influence--roughly the area south of the strategic Benguela railroad--it was unable to sustain anything more than isolated attacks into the economic and political heartland of Angola; the rich agricultural areas around Luanda, the diamond-producing regions near the Zairan border, and the oil fields in Cabinda in the far north. In addition to UNITA's lack of popular support in these areas, the Cuban/MPLA troops defending them enjoyed the use of a more highly developed logistical and communications network which made the anti-insurgency campaign more effective.

The net result of U.S. actions in Angola, thus, was somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, it is clear that they had significantly raised the cost of the war in both financial and human terms for the Luanda government, the Cubans, and the Soviet Union. The widely publicized military successes of UNITA forces also provided a steady stream of propaganda victories for U.S. policy. On the other hand, there seemed little prospect of

actually bringing the conflict to a successful conclusion. For all intents and purposes, Angola had been partitioned.

### **Latin America**

Events proceeded very differently in Central and South Latin America. In the south, the trend towards stable democratic political systems, first noted in the late 1970s, continued and deepened. By 1990, even Chile was governed by a popularly elected government. Spurred largely by the recoveries in the industrialized countries, and helped in most nations by the drop in oil prices, South American exports rose dramatically in the late 1980s, rekindling the sort of rapid economic growth which had not been witnessed since the mid-1970s.

In Central America, on the other hand, problems persisted--and even increased. The region's chronic economic difficulties and resulting political instabilities fueled insurgent activity in a number of countries. The U.S. provided extensive military and economic support to the governments of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador beginning in the mid-1980s, and also to the insurgents fighting the government of Nicaragua. While this support enabled the "Contras" to improve their military position, it also resulted in an escalation of the war effort by the Sandinista government. Nicaraguan attacks against "Contra" positions inside Honduras became both more frequent and more extensive, at times including the use of attack helicopters.

With the inauguration of the new U.S. administration in 1989, U.S. policy towards the region became even more active and direct. The most important innovation of the new administration was to introduce U.S. air power into Honduras. The stated goal of this deployment of Air Force tactical units was to defend Honduran territory, and to support the Honduran Army. It was widely understood, however, that the actual purpose of the United States was to support and defend "Contra" forces. The initial results of this initiative encouraged Washington. Sandinista incursions into Honduras diminished. Freed from the need to devote a major proportion of their resources to defending their base camps, the "Contras" were able to mount missions inside Nicaragua on a much larger scale. The results of their actions were felt throughout the small country. From 1987 through 1989, the "Contras" were able to disrupt the Nicaraguan economy by destroying the coffee harvest and attacking numerous industrial, communications, and energy-related facilities.

These actions clearly weakened the economic base of the Managua government, making it increasingly dependent on Cuban and Soviet support for survival. The hardships

inflicted on the Nicaraguan people, however, limited the "Contras" gains in public opinion. Despite concerted efforts on their part, the "Contra" forces continued to be seen by most Nicaraguans as more like an invading army than a popular insurgent force. The areas under their control, principally the northern border area, were occupied by a well-manned network of defensive positions garrisoned by regular forces. The principal "Contra" base camps, however, remained in Honduras, where U.S. air cover made them virtually invulnerable.

The increased visibility of the U.S. presence in Honduras was not without counter-productive aspects for U.S. policy. The increase in the U.S. presence had been opposed by the civilian government of Honduras and was carried out only as the result of an unofficial but widely recognized shift in the balance of political power in Tegucigalpa; increasingly, the country's military leaders intervened behind the scenes to overturn decisions by civilian leaders. An unfortunate result of this shift was the resurgence of anti-government insurgents within Honduras. The use of U.S. helicopter gunships and transports in support of the Honduran Army's efforts to combat this insurgency--which was considered by the U.S. to be a pure cover for Sandinista forces--ensured that its proportions remained small and its areas of operations confined to the most remote parts of the country. Still, the very existence of an insurgency in the country which the United States considered its key ally in the region was troubling.

There was also violence elsewhere in Central America as the U.S.-backed governments of El Salvador and Guatemala continued to fight anti-insurgency campaigns against a variety of rebel forces. El Salvador, in particular, found itself in a position similar to that of Nicaragua, as foreign-backed rebel forces, although unable to contest control of the country's core areas, proved virtually impossible to defeat in their own remote sanctuaries. In conjunction with the increase in its activities in Honduras after 1988, the U.S. administration increasingly sought a military solution to the situation in El Salvador. Starting in 1989, U.S. advisors regularly accompanied Salvadoran units into combat areas and not infrequently participated in actual fighting. In a parallel development, U.S. air assets based in Honduras were used to support the anti-insurgency activities of both the Salvadoran and the Guatemalan armed forces.

The first U.S. combat casualties in El Salvador were reported in late 1988. There were others in 1989 and 1990, including the downing of U.S. aircraft. Of particular significance was the loss of an American ground attack aircraft inside Nicaraguan territory in May 1991. These losses resulted in negative, if short-lived, political reactions in the

United States. On the whole, however, popular U.S. concerns about Central America were not sufficient to cause a generally successful administration to consider seriously changing its policy.

#### **SEQUENCE OF RELEVANT EVENTS: 1991-95**

The period from 1986 through 1990 generally had been one of U.S. dynamism contrasted with Soviet passivity. By the beginning of the new decade, however, Soviet leaders were seeking actively to reverse this pattern.

#### **Soviet Options in 1990**

The pattern which Soviet leaders saw in the international position of their country in 1991 was in many ways troubling, but not totally devoid of opportunities. The U.S.S.R. was beset by economic and political troubles at home and in Eastern Europe. In the third world, pro-Soviet governments had been forced on the defensive by U.S.-backed opponents. It was clear to Soviet leaders that these trends would have to be reversed if the Soviet Union were to maintain its international influence. Accordingly, Soviet leaders mapped a concerted effort to regain their momentum by conducting a military/political offensive in one carefully chosen region. Success in such an action, Soviet leaders concluded, would demonstrate convincingly that the Soviet Union was still a force to be reckoned with in the third world, capable of protecting its allies and punishing its enemies, while the United States remained unreliable in crisis situations. Failure to act, the Soviet government believed, might so erode the credibility of Soviet power as to endanger the entire structure of Soviet influence in world politics. U.S. pressures, increasing relentlessly since 1988, Soviet leaders concluded, left them with no choice but to respond.

One option would have been to step up Soviet support for its most seriously threatened allies, Afghanistan and Angola. These governments in question were in no immediate danger of falling, however, and Soviet leaders concluded that any escalation on their part in either country would be matched by the U.S. on behalf of insurgent movements, and that the net result would not be to Soviet advantage. In Angola, UNITA's secure, positions within its zone of control and the logistical difficulty of sustaining large-scale combat at that distance from Luanda argued against any attempt to reunite the country by force of arms. In Afghanistan, Soviet leaders were reluctant to risk the possibility that escalation might lead to the introduction of U.S. forces into Pakistan, or to the further alienation of India, or even to causing Iran to seek better ties with the West. In both

Afghanistan and Angola, therefore, the Soviet Union opted to contain the threat rather than seek to terminate it.

A possible opportunity of a very different nature existed in the Middle East. There the increasing military power and political isolation of Syria made a renewed Syrian-Israeli war a distinct possibility. Beginning in 1989, Damascus regularly had tested Soviet reactions to such a possibility, but Soviet leaders remained cool to the idea for two fundamental reasons: First, Soviet military experts were uncertain that the Syrians would prevail in a new war with Israel. Second, it was unclear what direct advantage might be gained for the Soviet Union even if the Syrians were successful. While the defeat of Israel would certainly be a blow to U.S. prestige, it was uncertain that a Syrian victory actually would improve the position of the U.S.S.R. in the Middle East. While never entirely rebuffed, therefore, the Syrian inquiries were put off by Soviet officials and Rifa'at Assad was encouraged to seek other means of gaining greater regional influence. The U.S.S.R. did continue its covert support of the growing Kurdish insurgent movement in Northern Iraq as part of a long-term strategy to seek a rapprochement with Iran--even at the risk of a break with Iraq, but this policy offered little hope of bringing the quick "victory" sought by the Kremlin.

Instead, Soviet decision makers concluded for several reasons that Central America was ideally suited to be the site of their counteroffensive. It was an area in which a number of governments allied with the United States were already in considerable difficulty, while pro-Soviet insurgent forces were established in the field. The presence of two Soviet allies in the region, Cuba and Nicaragua, provided both necessary support facilities and surrogate forces. The proximity of the region to the United States would make a Soviet victory there all the more spectacular. Moreover, popular reactions in the United States to the few deaths of Americans in Central America led Soviet planners to conclude that the U.S. administration would be reluctant to provoke a confrontation.

Most importantly, the Soviet Union felt that operations in Central America would give it leverage in other parts of the world. Soviet activities in Honduras or El Salvador might make effective bargaining chips to set off against U.S. involvement not only in Nicaragua, but also in Angola and Afghanistan. This last was especially important, given the clear parallel between the two areas in terms of their strategic importance and geographic position relative to each of the great powers. From Moscow's vantage point, the only obvious potential problem in Central America was that the position of the Nicaraguan government appeared somewhat precarious. U.S.-backed insurgents

controlled large areas of the northern border region, and their armed raids were a danger throughout the country. A vital first step, therefore, was to shore up the Sandinista regime. If this proved successful, it might itself compel an American withdrawal and gain the desired global effects. If the Americans persisted in the face of Sandinista gains, the stronger position of Managua would at least make possible continuance of the Soviet offensive.

### **Escalation in Central America**

During the winter and spring of 1991, Soviet activity increased throughout Central America. The number of Soviet and East European freighters docking at Cuban and Nicaraguan ports increased significantly. The Nicaraguan Army began to employ more sophisticated weapons, such as recent-vintage anti-personnel weapons, which it had not previously been known to possess. The number of Cuban military advisors in Managua swelled, and reports from the field spoke of Cuban troops being used in combat against the anti-government "Contras." At the same time, Soviet/Nicaraguan assistance to the various insurgent groups fighting pro-American governments in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala was increased significantly, and, for the first time, Soviet *Oscar* class cruise-missile-armed submarines were reported to have made calls in Cuban ports.

More ominously, satellite photos indicated preparations for the stationing of modern combat aircraft at an air base near Managua. In May 1991, Soviet long-range reconnaissance aircraft, based in Cuba, began to fly regular missions along the Caribbean coast of Central America. At the same time, the U.S. Navy reported that Soviet nuclear-powered attack submarines had been detected operating both in the Caribbean and along the Pacific coast of Central America. On June 2, 1991, a squadron of Soviet-built MiG-23 fighters were moved from Cuba to Nicaraguan airfields. U.S. government sources revealed that these planes were accompanied by Soviet "instructors."

The Soviet Union stated that it was prepared to take whatever steps were necessary to ensure the survival of the legitimate government of Nicaragua in its struggle against imperialist subversion. The Soviet spokesman stated that the United States must cease its support of the "Contra" rebels and pointedly warned against any attempt to impose a blockade of Nicaragua. "The Soviet fleet," Moscow noted, "was in a position to defend freedom of the seas." Two days later, a group of Soviet *Bear* long-range aircraft, which had been in Cuba, were moved to the Nicaraguan airfield of Punta Huerta. The Nicaraguan government announced that the planes were on a courtesy visit and carried no weapons.

U.S. analysts expressed uncertainty as to whether the aircraft were the naval strike, strategic cruise missile, or reconnaissance version of the *Bear*.

The Soviet *Bears* returned to Cuba three days later. The Soviet offensive was maintained, however, when a Soviet nuclear-powered submarine of a type known to carry long-range cruise missiles appeared in the outer harbor of Corinto, on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua. Officers from the submarine were brought ashore and entertained briefly by representatives of the Sandinista government before the submarine returned to sea.

The U.S. administration strongly condemned each of these actions. In a nationally televised speech, the President spoke of unprecedented Soviet activity in the Western Hemisphere and said that the United States would not tolerate the new state of affairs in Nicaragua. No specific actions were announced, however.

In July 1991, Soviet reconnaissance aircraft began to make regular use of the Punta Huerta airfield as a staging base for long-range observation missions along the U.S. west coast. The *Bears*, long used for reconnaissance missions along the east coast by flying between Cuba and Murmansk, added segments to Punta Huerta and then extended flights as far north as San Francisco, remaining outside U.S. airspace. At the same time, U.S. agencies began to note evidence of construction underway at the port of Corinto and also at Bluefields, on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, which resembled facilities used for the servicing of nuclear submarines in Soviet ports. This last development, which would violate the U.S./Soviet agreement concluded in 1970 following an aborted Soviet effort to build a submarine base in Cuba, convinced the American president that action was necessary.

The Soviet Union was not suffering from a delusion that the United States would accede quietly to its deployment of strategic nuclear weapons in Nicaragua. Rather, Soviet leaders hoped to establish a situation in which they could trade the removal of their forces in Nicaragua for tacit U.S. recognition of the Sandinista regime. The ambiguity of the deployments was critical to the success of Soviet plans. They hoped to match in Nicaragua Nikita Khrushchev's 1962 accomplishment in Cuba (the removal of strategic systems in return for the tacit acceptance of the Castro government), without repeating Khrushchev's mistake of being forced into a humiliating public retreat. Accordingly, aircraft and submarines were kept on the move, transiting Nicaragua rather than remaining there. The object of the exercise was to demonstrate that Nicaragua potentially could be used as the base for such weapons and to establish certain precedents which could be built on in the future, not actually to deploy them in the near term.



In forming these plans, however, Soviet leaders seriously misjudged the reactions of the American president. Far from seeing the latest Soviet moves as an incentive to negotiate, he chose to respond directly and in strength. At the request of the U.S. government, "Contra" insurgents were ordered secretly to attack the suspected Soviet facilities. A few such attacks were carried out in August, particularly against the port of Bluefields, but the attackers were turned back by Nicaraguan troops before reaching the area of believed Soviet activity. The president then sent U.S. Special Forces secretly to Nicaragua with the mission of destroying the Soviet installations. In conjunction with this decision, the U.S. initiated major naval exercises near Nicaragua's Pacific and Caribbean coasts, previously planned Special Forces and National Guard exercises in Honduras were extended, naval forces in the the Caribbean and eastern Pacific were strengthened, and the president called publicly on the U.S.S.R. to withdraw its strategic forces from Nicaragua.

On the night of September 6, 1991, the unfinished port facilities at Bluefields were destroyed by saboteurs. The United States neither confirmed nor denied that this was the work of its forces, and no direct proof of direct U.S. involvement could be found. The Secretary of State, warned the Soviet ambassador privately that the U.S. would take direct action if Soviet forces did not leave Nicaragua. Three days later, U.S. special forces teams destroyed two Soviet long-range aircraft on the ground at Punta Huerta with shoulder-fired missiles. This time, however, U.S. involvement became incontrovertible as Nicaraguan forces located and engaged the attacking unit. The U.S. team, minus fatalities, was evacuated by Army helicopters flown from Honduras.

The United States acknowledged the commando attack publicly, but refused to apologize, stating that the aircraft in question were a direct threat to U.S. security, and hinting at further attacks of an indeterminate nature if Soviet forces remained in the country. Later that day, U.S. carrier-based aircraft began to fly low-level missions over the Nicaraguan coast. The implication was clear.

On the night of September 12, the remaining Soviet aircraft at Punta Huerta returned to Cuba. Later that week, reconnaissance photographs showed that work at the Corinto harbor installation had ceased, and word came that Soviet personnel had been seen boarding aircraft in Managua on their way out of the country. These facts were widely publicized by the U.S. government as a sign that its policy had been successful. No word on the subject was forthcoming from either the Nicaraguan or the Soviet governments but, as weeks passed without any resumption of Soviet activity in Nicaragua, the American interpretation of the events of the summer gained widespread international acceptance. It

was agreed generally that, faced with the threat of superior U.S. military force and a demonstrated willingness on the part of the American administration to employ military means, Soviet leaders had concluded that their position in Nicaragua was untenable. By December 1992, the Sandinista government in Managua was seeking to negotiate with rebel forces and holding out the prospect of power-sharing arrangements, while distancing itself from both Moscow and Havana. The limits of Soviet power seemed to have been demonstrated dramatically.

The defeat which it had suffered in Central America further increased pressures on the Soviet government. The leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev was called increasingly into question. In retrospect, it appears that the General Secretary and his close advisors concluded late in 1991 that selecting Central America to be the scene of the counter-offensive had been a mistake and that the only way to salvage the Soviet Union's international position (and insure their political survival) was to seek immediate retribution against the United States elsewhere. A new foreign policy initiative therefore was required; the opportunity soon presented itself in the Middle East.

### **Crisis in the Middle East**

By the autumn of 1991, the military-dominated Syrian government was faced with something of a dilemma. On the one hand, its military position was arguably the best it had ever enjoyed. The army's heavy-handed tactics had crushed all organized internal opposition, and had imposed a measure of order in most of Lebanon. The experience gained in these operations, together with the vast quantities of first-quality equipment provided by the Soviet Union, had encouraged the Syrian army to think of itself as the dominant military force in the region. On the international scene, however, with the exception of the Soviet Union and its allies, Syria found itself entirely isolated. Iran had been antagonized by the army's treatment of the Shi'ites in Syria and Lebanon. Long-standing hostilities between the Syrian government and those of Jordan and Iraq continued unabated. Syria's close ties to the U.S.S.R. disturbed Egypt and the Gulf states, and had resulted finally in the ending of financial support from the latter. Finally, Syria's continued support for terrorist actions carried out by radical Palestinian factions had earned it the hostility of the United States and Western Europe.

By the army's reasoning, Syria's military strengths, if employed promptly, could make up for its political weaknesses. As presented to the Syrian president in the late summer of 1991, the Army's plan was a contemporary version of Egypt's initiative in the

1973 War. It called for a surprise attack against Israel on the Golan Heights; Syria's military leaders were confident that, given tactical surprise, they would be successful, at least initially, against the Israeli army. Such an initial success, it was believed, would make it impossible for Egypt and possibly other Arab states to remain out of the war, and would ensure a renewed regional leadership role for Syria. The army's only real fear was that the United States might intervene. In order to prevent this, the cooperation of the Soviet Union would be critical.

In December 1991, President Rifa'at Assad took a long-planned trip to Moscow. In secret discussions with General Secretary Gorbachev, he outlined the Syrian plan. Soviet supplies and equipment would be expected. The most important role of the Soviet Union, however, as the Syrian leader saw it, would be primarily an indirect one. After the initial Syrian victory--reoccupation of the entire Golan Heights was the goal that the Syrian army had established--the Soviet Union would call for a cease-fire at existing positions, ostensibly to protect Israel from total annihilation. If Israel and the United States acquiesced at this point, the next step would be to convene international negotiations co-chaired by the great powers. The most important Soviet role, if necessary, would be to deter any direct intervention on the part of the United States by threatening direct attacks against Israel if such actions took place.

The Soviet Union had discouraged such plans in the past, considering them too risky and seeing better opportunities elsewhere. Following the Central American debacle, however, the Syrian option began to look more attractive. It offered the much-desired opportunity to involve the United States in a clear defeat without directly placing Soviet forces at risk. Further, the risks involved now seemed acceptable, since the Soviet leadership had become increasingly desperate. Even a Syrian defeat such as had followed the 1973 War, they reasoned, need not leave them worse off than they were already.

In any case, Soviet military planners increasingly shared Assad's confidence in the capabilities of the Syrian armed forces. They also concluded that in the Middle East, unlike in Central America, the Soviet Union would enjoy the geo-strategic advantage, since Soviet military power was proximate, while the U.S. would have to contend with a variety of factors--its standing in the Arab world, the reluctance of the Europeans to become involved--that would cause the U.S. to seek an early settlement. If these factors did not compel U.S. cooperation, Soviet leaders foresaw their use of Libyan bases to threaten U.S. naval forces in the Mediterranean with air power and also to frighten the Europeans. It was agreed that a deployment of Soviet aircraft to Libya would be coordinated with the call for

a cease-fire, if the Syrian government could persuade Colonel Qadafi to permit the open Soviet use of Libyan facilities.

The Syrian attack began as planned on the 20th of March 1992; the results, however, were disappointing. From the first hours of the war, it became clear that Israeli intelligence had known of the impending attack and that effective actions had been taken to meet it. Although the Israelis had refrained for political reasons from overt preemptive action, their counterattack was under way almost as soon as the Syrian offensive began. Most importantly, Syrian attacks on Israeli airfields met with little success; by the evening, Israel had secured control of the skies. By the end of the first day of fighting, there were no Syrian forces on Israeli territory.

During the pre-dawn hours of the 21st, medium-range, surface-to-surface missiles fired from Syria resulted in substantial civilian casualties in northern Israel. In retaliation, Israeli aircraft began an intensive strategic bombing campaign lasting many hours. The sources of the missile attacks were destroyed, as well as major military and governmental targets, including sites in downtown Damascus. The Israeli government stated that in view of the Syrian aggression and the missile attacks on civilian targets, its forces would penetrate deep into Syria with the purpose of crushing Syrian military power decisively. In these circumstances, other Arab states were understandably reluctant to associate themselves with the Syrian venture and urged the U.S. privately to bring about a cease-fire. Those states which had been hostile to Syria initially, most especially Jordan and Iraq, maintained an almost total official silence on the matter, and no country in the region moved to come to Syria's assistance. Only Libya openly backed Syria. Although its immediate material contribution to the Syrian effort was tiny, Colonel Qadafi's decision to become involved in the conflict resulted in Libyan bases being made available to Soviet aircraft--a development which was to take on considerable significance.

In this setting, the Soviet call for a cease-fire on the 23rd, appeared in a very different light than had been intended originally. The Israeli government flatly ignored the initial Soviet request and pressed on with its military operations. The United States suggested that the U.N. Security Council be convened, but was plainly also in no hurry to force a solution. On the morning of the 24th, the Soviet government repeated its call for a cease-fire, this time threatening to intervene "to protect Soviet citizens currently residing in Syria," if the Israeli offensive was not halted. It was learned that Soviet "advisors" had been among the casualties of Israeli air raids.

The Soviet airlift of military equipment and supplies was intensified, also on the 24th. This development initiated a new aspect of the crisis when the Turkish government, at the behest of a secret U.S. request, warned the U.S.S.R. that it would not permit overflights of its territory by Soviet military aircraft en route to Syria. The Soviet Union did not comment publicly on the Turkish denial, although its private response was scathing, and rerouted its flights over Iran and Iraq.

This action by Turkey, which reversed Turkey's acquiescence to overflights in 1967 and 1973, was a logical outgrowth of the development of U.S.-Turkish relations since the late 1980s, as well as of Turkey's internal situation. U.S. behavior in the 1987 Cyprus crisis had greatly improved U.S.-Turkish relations. The democratically-elected Turkish government which took power in 1988 was oriented strongly towards the West, seeing Turkey's future to lie, both economically and politically, in closer relations with Western Europe and the United States rather than in identification with the Arab countries of the Middle East. Reinforcing this trend was the fact that Turkey's only serious internal problem in the late 1980s and early 1990s resulted from the activities of Kurdish and Islamic fundamentalist groups in the far eastern sections of the country. The Turkish government suspected that these activities were supported in large part by Arab extremists and--in the case of the Kurds--by the Soviet Union. In this context, the Turks were willing to go quite far in backing U.S. anti-Soviet initiatives in the Middle East.

The Israeli ground advance slowed near the outskirts of Damascus on the 25th, but air attacks were stepped up, hitting targets throughout Syria. Israel considered opening up a second front through northern Jordan, but deferred in anticipation of the U.S. position. It made routine use of territory in Southern Lebanon, however.

The Soviet Union, claiming that additional personnel had been killed in the new air attacks, informed the United States (and Israel) that it would begin deploying air defense units to Syria if the Israeli offensive did not cease at once. On the 26th, the initiation of the transfer of at least one, and possibly two, Soviet air defense "armies" to Syria was confirmed. At the same time, Soviet maritime strike and fighter aircraft were deployed to Libya, from where they began to carry out surveillance of U.S. fleet activities. In response, the United States reaffirmed its support for Israel as the victim of aggression, introduced a third aircraft carrier into the Mediterranean, and began preparations to move both a fourth carrier and a second Marine Amphibious Brigade to the region.

By this time, the Israeli advance had stopped at the outskirts of Damascus. Israeli political demands at this time included a total Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, recognition

of Israel, including Israeli sovereignty over the Golan, and the creation of a de-militarized zone inside the Syrian border. This offer was rejected by Assad, who vowed to fight to the last so long as Israeli troops were on Syrian soil. From the Soviet Union came the threat of unspecified military action if Israeli troops did not pull back and if Israeli attacks on Soviet personnel in Syria did not cease.

Also on the 26th, the Turkish government reported that its air force had intercepted Soviet aircraft in Turkish airspace. The aircraft in question were identified as Soviet fighter/attack planes en route to Syria. According to Turkish spokesmen, the Soviet aircraft did not heed repeated warnings to leave Turkish airspace and instead took threatening action against the intercepting aircraft. No shots were fired by either side, but the Soviet aircraft continued on their way. Turkey warned that its aircraft had been ordered to fire in all future encounters. The next day, two Turkish F-16 fighters were shot down by Soviet aircraft over Turkish territory. Soviet claims that its aircraft fired only in self-defense were discounted by the Turks who pointed out that, in any case, the Soviet planes were violating the Turkish prohibition against overflights.

In retaliation, Turkey declared that no Soviet warships would be allowed to transit through the Bosphorus for the duration of a so-called "emergency period." The Turkish government claimed that its action was justified by the 1936 Montreux convention, which gave Turkey the right to deny passage to the warships of belligerent nations, even if Turkey itself was not at war. Turkey also requested the assistance of NATO to enforce both its partial closing of the Straits and the integrity of its airspace. In response to the Turkish request, a wing of U.S. F-15 fighter aircraft were deployed from the United States to air bases in eastern Turkey.

The pace of events slowed somewhat in the following week, as the Israeli advance halted at the edge of Damascus. It was unclear whether the stalemate was more the result of an Israeli decision not to overextend its position or of the stiffened resistance of the Syrian army. The air war over Syria and Lebanon continued unabated, however, with increasing participation of Soviet pilots and aircraft.

The deployment of U.S. aircraft to Turkey was significant in that it represented the first U.S. commitment of armed forces on the ground in or near the area of conflict. Elsewhere in the Middle East, pre-positioned elements of the Rapid Deployment Force were in Egypt, along with the U.S. contingent in the Sinai, but these forces were keeping an extremely low profile and had played no role in the events to date. The U.S. naval presence in the Mediterranean had been expanded considerably. Four aircraft carrier

groups and a surface action group were stationed in the eastern and central Mediterranean, where they provided at least tacit enforcement of Turkey's partial closure of the Straits as well as a visible symbol of the U.S. commitment to Israel.

Domestic and foreign pressures on Israel to accept a cease-fire multiplied rapidly, but, the Israeli government continued to insist on its original conditions. On April 1st, 10 days after the original Syrian attack, Israeli ground forces began to move again, seemingly to surround the Syrian capital. An Israeli armored column simultaneously swept north deep into Lebanon, driving out the remaining Syrian forces deployed there. Israeli air attacks increasingly concentrated on Damascus in an obvious attempt to put pressure on the Syrian government.

The Soviets responded to this move by significantly escalating their position in Syria. On the 2nd of April, two Soviet airborne divisions began to move, by air, into positions just north and east of Damascus, a move intended clearly to prevent Israeli encirclement of the city. Detachments of Soviet troops also secured key installations within the city, including, most importantly, the airfield. On the 3rd, claiming that their newly deployed units had come under attack, Soviet leaders took a step which was to prove a decisive turning point in the crisis. Soviet aircraft based in Syria began to carry out air raids inside Israel, triggering the first direct U.S. intervention in the conflict. Carrier-based fighters from the U.S. Sixth Fleet began to fly defensive air patrols over Israeli territory, thus freeing additional Israeli aircraft for missions over Lebanon and Syria. At least one Soviet plane was believed to have been downed by a U.S. F-18.

At this point, leaders in Moscow and Washington, apprehensive at the sudden escalation of the situation, agreed privately to bring about a cease-fire; the local belligerents, however, proved difficult to coerce. Israel announced that it would accept a cease-fire in place only if all Soviet forces were evacuated from Syria. Syria, fearing that such a withdrawal would leave it at the mercy of Israel, refused and reiterated its willingness to fight to the end--a position which seemed to be borne up by the continuing stand of the Syrian army around Damascus in the face of heavy casualties. (Soviet ground forces had yet to enter the battle.) The Soviet government also was unwilling to withdraw in such circumstances, feeling that such a retreat following on the heels of the Central American defeat would seal its doom.

On the 6th, in the face of considerable U.S. pressure, Israel offered a new proposal. It would accept a "gradual withdrawal" of Soviet forces from Syria if U.S. forces of equivalent size were deployed to Israel in the interim period. Seeing this as a way

to end the threatened air war over the eastern Mediterranean, both powers agreed. Elements of the U.S. 82nd Airborne division were in Israel the next day, with more forces, including U.S. Air Force tactical squadrons to come, and a cease-fire was put into effect.

### **Great Power Militarization of the Middle East**

Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union, when they dispatched forces to the Middle East early in 1992, intended those deployments to become permanent. In both cases, the decision to send military units was made in the heat of the moment in response to specific regional developments. As the spring of 1992 turned to summer, however, it became apparent increasingly that withdrawal of the great powers' forces would be difficult.

Negotiations were convened in May. Israel stuck to its demand for international recognition of its sovereignty over the Golan. The United States, while not associating itself publicly with this position, did not publicly oppose it either. In any case, the U.S. emphasized, it would keep its forces in Israel until all Soviet forces had been removed from Syria. The official Soviet position was that its forces would be withdrawn if U.S. forces simultaneously left Israel, and if Israel withdrew immediately to the 1967 cease-fire line on the Golan. The Syrians, however, took the position that Israel should withdraw back to the pre-1967 borders. In fact, many observers believed that the principal Syrian goal was to ensure that Soviet troops remained in Syria for as long as possible, Syria's own armed forces being in no condition to resist a new Israeli assault. Negotiations were recessed in June, never to be resumed.

The next step was taken by Israel. In July 1992, Israeli troops were withdrawn unilaterally from their advanced positions in Syria. Having no desire to reenact the occupation of Lebanon in the early 1980s, Israel pulled the bulk of its forces back, although a few strategic positions just over the border were maintained and fortified. In announcing the pull-backs, the Israeli government said that it was creating a "special security zone" in the area formerly occupied by its troops. Syrian civil administration could resume in this area, Israeli spokesmen stated, but Israel would not permit any Syrian or other armed forces to reoccupy it. Any such units would come under immediate attack from Israeli forces. Further, Israeli forces would make periodic sweeps through the area to ensure that order was maintained and that the prohibition on military activity was observed. The Israeli statement also ruled out the deployment of United Nations or any other peace-keeping forces in the security zone.



In the following months, the Israeli armed forces proved entirely capable of enforcing the exclusion of Syrian forces. A number of minor engagements were fought, most requiring only the intervention of small Israeli ground units or aircraft, and by the beginning of the summer it seemed that Syria had abandoned the idea of reoccupying the zone for the present.

The Syrian army, in fact, had other problems. Domestic opposition to the regime resurfaced with a vengeance. Rooted in longstanding ethnic and religious problems, the conflict was fueled by the army's loss of prestige following its defeat in the war with Israel. Beginning in the fall of 1992, the Syrian army was forced to devote an increasing proportion of its resources to combating internal opposition. The presence of Soviet troops, thus, was no less necessary than it had been before the Israeli withdrawal. Indeed, the size of the Soviet presence in Syria grew steadily throughout 1992 until, by Western estimates, three Soviet divisions, in addition to two air defense armies and elements from Frontal Aviation, were present in Syria. Increasingly, Soviet forces took up positions at the edge of the Israeli-declared security zone, thus freeing Syrian troops to maintain order and conduct counterinsurgency operations. The U.S.S.R. also deployed an air defense army, two wings of Frontal Aviation, and *Backfire* strike aircraft in Libya.

The size of the U.S. presence in Israel never approached that of Soviet forces in Syria. At its height, the U.S. force in Israel consisted of two brigades of airborne troops (the 82nd's third brigade was still in the Sinai) and one brigade of armor. The U.S., however, did station two full wings of F-15 fighters in the Middle East. The bulk of these were located in Israel but two squadrons remained at Turkish bases and one more was deployed in Egypt. This last, although of little strategic significance, was of considerable political importance, underlining as it did the fact that U.S. actions in the Middle East were directed against the Soviet Union rather than the Arab world as a whole, and in fact enjoyed the support of important Arab states. In addition, the Sixth Fleet was enlarged; four carrier task forces were present in the Mediterranean more of the time than not. From the autumn of 1992 onwards, pressures to withdraw the great power's forces from the eastern Mediterranean became increasingly vague and the situation seemed to acquire a certain permanence.

This state of affairs was certainly not the one which had been sought by Soviet leaders when they embarked on the Syrian adventure, but upon reflection, the Soviet government concluded that its position was not without certain positive aspects. Soviet intervention arguably had saved the Syrian regime from collapse, initially with regard to the

Israeli move against Damascus and later in the context of the internal rebellion within Syria. This had been accomplished at a high cost in Soviet material, but with relatively little loss of Soviet life, and had demonstrated the U.S.S.R.'s willingness and capability to come to the aid of allies. Further, Soviet military analysts concluded that the United States would have considerably more difficulty in maintaining its increased military presence in the Middle East than would the Soviets, for both political and geographical reasons. In drawing this last conclusion, however, the Soviet Union once again seriously underestimated U.S. political resolve.

### **Incidents in the Mediterranean During 1993**

The increasingly permanent nature of the situation did not make it any more peaceful. The existence of a number of "friction points" ensured that tensions in the Mediterranean remained at a high level. The most obvious problem was posed by the direct consequences of the 1992 war, which had left belligerent units in close proximity. Clashes between Israeli and Syrian/Soviet aircraft over both Syria and Lebanon took place with some regularity. While the majority of these incidents did not result in exchanges of fire, some did, and casualties on both sides mounted. U.S. aircraft based in Israel did not participate in missions over Arab territory, but their very presence increased the implied stakes of the Soviet/Israeli aerial shadow-boxing.

The most serious source of conflict in the Mediterranean, however, was the growing complexity of Soviet effort to supply its forces in Syria. Difficult from the beginning because of Turkey's action, the situation presented far more serious problems for the Soviet armed forces when, in January 1993, the government of Iraq, disturbed at the seemingly permanent association of Soviet troops with its long-time rival in Syria, announced that it had found evidence that Kurdish separatists in its northern provinces were being supported by the Soviet Union. This announcement, which, of course, only articulated publicly what the Iraqis had long known, but had chosen to ignore, followed conclusion of a protracted struggle within the Iraqi political and military leadership between pro- and anti-Soviet elements; the latter prevailed. Iraq expelled the Soviet ambassador and declared that it would review the entire scope of its relations with the U.S.S.R. It took one concrete action immediately: Iraqi airspace was declared closed to Soviet and Syrian aircraft.

The Soviet Union did not respond immediately, but by July its level of support for the Kurdish rebels had been greatly advanced, in the hope of effectively removing northern

Iraq from the authority of the Baghdad government. This tactic seemed successful initially. Armed with Soviet weapons and aided by Soviet/Syrian-trained advisors, the Kurds of Iraq scored a number of small victories over Iraqi government forces in the summer of 1993. An unforeseen result of these successes, however, was the rapid spread of the Kurdish insurgency over the Turkish border. This development caught Soviet planners by surprise, but a decision was made quickly to exploit the opportunity which it provided to put pressure on the hostile Turkish government.

The tactic soon created a predictable backlash. Moving swiftly to deal with the isolated Kurdish uprisings, the Turkish army in several cases pursued the insurgents over the Syrian border. On September 14, 1993, such a pursuit led to a pitched battle between Turkish and Syrian units. Each side claimed that the incident, which resulted in dozens of casualties on both sides, had taken place on its territory. It was followed by similar clashes. At least one of these, however, on November 3rd, unquestionably took place on Turkish soil. Significantly, this last incident involved not only ground, but also air units from both sides. The incident assumed even greater significance when it was learned that the pilot of one of the Syrian jets shot down in the battle was Russian. The Turkish government declared that this constituted direct Soviet aggression against Turkey and that, in retaliation, it was closing the Bosphorus to all Soviet shipping, civil as well as military, effective immediately and until such time as all Soviet forces were withdrawn from their positions in Syria. A meeting of the North Atlantic Council was then requested by Turkey, and held in Ankara on the 5th of November. At its close, the ministers declared unanimous support for the Turkish position. In a separate announcement, the U.S. admiral in charge of NATO's Southern Command confirmed that all forces under his command, and most especially the U.S. Sixth Fleet, would render any assistance which Turkey required in order to enforce the NATO decision.

Turkey's action was once again based on the Montreux Treaty, Article 18 of which stated that in case of "imminent threat of war," Turkey could close the Straits to all shipping, both commercial and military. The Soviet Union, understandably, challenged this interpretation, claiming first of all that no such "imminent threat" existed and, secondly, that even in such a case the Treaty required that the Straits be closed to ships of all nations. The Turkish and American governments, predictably, were unmoved by this position, and the conservative governments of Western Europe, which the Soviets had hoped to intimidate, reacted with anger rather than increased caution. In fact, the U.S.S.R. and all other parties involved realized that with U.S. backing the Turks could indeed enforce a selective closure of the Straits against anything short of a major attack by land and

sea. This the Soviets were unwilling to contemplate, concluding that the risk and cost of such a major military action would be out of all proportion to its possible benefits.

The unexpected Turkish move and the Soviet decision not to respond directly further complicated the problem of logistical support for Soviet forces in Syria, since all direct air and water routes were now closed officially. Although the confused situation in northern Iraq made it possible for some Soviet air traffic to continue to fly south over Iran, and then westward across northern Iraq to Syria, this was hardly sufficient to sustain the Soviet forces in the Middle East. Increasing unofficial cooperation between the Turkish and Iraqi air forces, moreover, made this route too risky for all but the most urgent cargoes. The shortest remaining air route from the Soviet Union to the Middle East was via Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia to Libya, and from there to Syria. The length and complexity of this route, however, made it expensive and unattractive, especially as it routed Soviet air traffic directly over the U.S. fleet concentration in the Central Mediterranean.

In any case, the great bulk of the supplies and equipment required by Soviet forces in Syria required that the majority of them be moved by sea. Maritime shipments would now have to come from Soviet Baltic or northern ports, through the Straits of Gibraltar, and along the entire length of the Mediterranean to Syria. The implications for Soviet military planners of having the principal line of supply (and potentially of retreat) for their expeditionary force in Syria running through the heart of NATO's home waters were disturbing, to say the least. Even if NATO naval forces scrupulously avoided interfering with Soviet ships on their way to the Middle East, the close surveillance to which they could be subjected would reinforce Soviet recognition that their operation would be hostage to NATO's good will.

In the Mediterranean, moreover, the good will of both sides, as it were, was already being strained severely as a result of repeated incidents involving U.S. carrier-based aircraft and Soviet planes operating from Libya and Syria. Initially, the incidents resulted from Soviet efforts to harass U.S. task forces operating in the central Mediterranean and did not result in casualties. With the great increase in Soviet shipping through the central Mediterranean which followed the closing of the Straits, however, the stakes perceived by both sides rose. Soviet pilots were ordered to fly escort missions to protect Soviet freighters en route to Syria, and their subsequent behavior indicated that they had also been given more lenient rules of engagement. On a number of occasions during the spring of 1994, U.S. aircraft on what were considered to be routine reconnaissance missions were fired upon. Both Soviet and U.S. aircraft were lost as a result of these incidents. More

ominously, U.S. naval vessels in the Central Mediterranean came under attack on three separate occasions from aircraft of the Libyan air force, which were believed to be flown by Soviet pilots. Although none of these incidents resulted in the loss of an American ship, they served further to heighten the level of tension in the Mediterranean.

For a second time in two years, the great powers seemed to be on the brink of a major conflict. There was considerable fear in Europe that the air duels and naval clashes over the Mediterranean would soon spread to the North Atlantic, and eventually lead to a broader conflict. Significantly, however, reactions by the great powers themselves were not as severe as those following the incidents in 1992. Both sides had seemed to grow somewhat accustomed to a more violent relationship. In any event, the question was soon moot as a new development changed the complexion of the situation. In May 1994, unusual activity was detected at several Yugoslav ports and airfields and, on the 22nd of that month the government of Yugoslavia announced that it had granted the U.S.S.R. the right to transship military supplies through its territory, making free use of certain undisclosed ports and airfields.

These concessions greatly simplified the Soviets' logistical problems, once again giving them direct access to Mediterranean waters. The Soviet position improved further when the Greek government announced it would not permit the warships or military aircraft of any nation to conduct belligerent operations within its territorial waters, in essence according sanctuary to Soviet merchant ships.

The immediate result of these developments was to lower the level of tension in the Mediterranean. U.S. carriers were pulled back from their positions near the Libyan coast, thus removing one source of friction. Perhaps as a tacit quid pro quo, the Soviet rules of engagement seemed again to be tightened. It is thus ironic that the Soviet acquisition of logistical facilities in Yugoslavia over the longer term served as the key element in a sequence of events which led eventually to the outbreak of the major U.S./Soviet conflict. Tracing that chain of events requires a measure of backtracking, however, in order to follow the evolution of conditions in Yugoslavia to the point of the Soviet intervention in that country in 1994.

#### **INTERNAL STRIFE IN YUGOSLAVIA, 1992-94**

The strains which had threatened to paralyze the Yugoslav federal government in the late 1980s continued unabated into the 1990s. By 1991, the devolution of practical authority to the regional, and even local, level had reached such a point that the continued

existence of the nation of Yugoslavia as a cohesive political unit seemed in considerable doubt. Not all elements of the Yugoslav population were satisfied with this state of affairs, with unitary sentiment coming from three distinct sources.

Least important was the state and party bureaucracy. Although not devoid of subnational loyalties, the "apparat" of the Yugoslav state had not entirely disintegrated. Especially within the Yugoslav Communist Party, there remained a strong current of respect for the national vision of Marshal Tito.

A second source of unitary sentiment was the government of the Serbian Republic. Its leaders realized that the tangible benefits which Serbia derived from its association with the other republics, and especially with Slovenia and Croatia, were considerable. The latter's more developed economies were a source of both employment and needed goods. Further, their tentative orientation to the west was not without benefit, as it facilitated cooperative relations between Western Europe and Yugoslavia as a whole, bringing much-needed technological and financial support. Serbian elites, moreover, were well aware that Serbia's international position of relative independence was due primarily to its role as the dominant force in the Yugoslav federation. Any weakening of the federation, would be translated into a weakening of Serbia.

The final force working in favor of Yugoslav unity was the armed forces. According to the Yugoslav constitution, these were divided between the centrally controlled Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) which possessed the bulk of Yugoslavia's modern military equipment, and the Territorial Defense Forces, comprised mainly of reservists organized at the republic and local level. Like the party apparatus, the YPA was an organization in which the ideology of Yugoslav nationhood had taken firm hold. The increasing unrest in the non-Serbian republics served to stiffen the Army's resolution. As the ostensible guardian of order, the military reacted harshly against the beginnings of open dissent. Much of the YPA's Serbian-dominated officer corp also shared with the Serbian political elite a distrust of the West and a desire for closer ties with the Soviet Union. They saw the Westernizing of the northern republics as the chief cause of the unrest that was emerging there.

Matters reached a crisis in May 1992. At the time, there was a move in the Federal Executive Council to reorganize the Yugoslav People's Army so that effective command would be held at the republic, rather than at the federal level. This seemed to the pro-unity forces to represent an irreversible step towards the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Such a move had in fact been proposed once before, in 1971, at a time when ethnically-based nationalist

feelings were high in the northern republics. At that time, the power and prestige of Marshall Tito was sufficient to stop it. In 1992, however, no one of Tito's stature was available and the centralizing forces were correspondingly weaker. When it appeared that this measure would be passed, despite the strenuous objections of Serbia, the Army's high command made its move. Armored units were positioned in the streets of Belgrade and an announcement was made that the Yugoslav federal constitution had been temporarily revoked, and that the existing government would be replaced by a provisional governing council consisting of both military and civilian members.

The council, when it was named, contained elements from the three pro-unity factions, but it was clear that the army was its driving force. Military governors were appointed to "assist" the civil government of the various republics, and were given the particular mission of putting down unrest. As might have been expected, however, unrest increased steadily under the new regime. The response of the provisional government was harsh. The northern republics of Slovenia and Croatia, which had been the scene of most of the open protests, were placed under martial law, with the military there given the authority to arrest and detain suspected dissidents. At the same time, those units of the YPA comprised primarily of Croatian and Slovenian troops were either moved out of the northern republics or confined to barracks, while units from other parts of Yugoslavia were moved into the north.

The imposition of martial law only changed the character of Croatian and Slovenian dissidence. Instead of open street demonstrations, dissident forces in the north--which began to think of themselves increasingly as Serbian and Croatian nationalists--began to rely on violent clandestine actions. Sabotage of military installations, government facilities, and economic targets became a major problem.

These developments led to a series of widely publicized abuses by the security forces, including the torture of prisoners, kidnappings of suspected dissidents, and--in January 1994--the shooting by security forces of twelve members of a student group which had been protesting the arrest of one of its members. These events received a great deal of attention in Western Europe (although not in the United States), and European public opinion quickly turned against the new Yugoslav government. This in turn led West European governments to curtail their economic and political relations with Yugoslavia, a move whose principal result was to exacerbate economic problems in the northern republics.

Faced with what it perceived as a threat of full-scale insurgency in the north, the provisional government of Yugoslavia came increasingly to believe that the forces at its disposal were inadequate to deal with the problem. Moreover, it soon became apparent that the only place where assistance might be found was in Moscow. The difficulties consistently being encountered by the Soviet Union in the Mediterranean, thus, provided an opportunity to the Yugoslav government. In return for logistical facilities, Belgrade received from the Soviets the promise of covert anti-insurgency help and assistance in developing a more modern and capable federal armed force.

### **YUGOSLAVIA BECOMES THE FOCUS OF CRISIS, 1994-95**

The introduction of Soviet security forces into Yugoslavia did not remain a secret for long. The increasingly well organized Croatian resistance soon gathered considerable proof of Soviet involvement and vowed to make Russians a primary target of reprisals. At the same time, the open Soviet military presence in the south was causing considerable local resentment.

This presence was initially concentrated at the Montenegrin port of Tivat, which had long been used by the Soviet Navy for occasional repairs and resupply. As the volume of men and materiel grew rapidly, however, Soviet activities expanded to include the nearby naval base of Kotor, and eventually the Dalmatian port of Split. In all of these areas, the heavy-handed tactics of the Soviet military in dealing with local populations led to confrontation, to which the obvious link between the Soviets and the much-disliked, Serbian-dominated central government also contributed.

A decisive step was taken in July 1995 with the creation of the People's Front for the Freedom of Croatia and Slovenia, the PFFCS. This shadowy organization, which Western intelligence services believed to be a loose association of autonomous groups, soon began to claim credit for acts of sabotage not only against the Yugoslav Army, but also against Soviet logistical installations and military movements. In particular, the PFFCS was often successful in cutting the strategic railways linking Split with Zagreb, and Belgrade with Titograd--from where Soviet materiel was transshipped to Kotor and Tivat--thus hindering the Soviet effort to move large quantities of materiel. This latter aspect of the PFFCS's program aroused the interest of the U.S. administration, which had taken scant notice of events in Yugoslavia before that. When it became clear that the Yugoslav rebels, whatever their ultimate goals, were capable of significantly hampering Soviet operations, covert assistance was made available to them.



It is worth noting that the decision to provide such assistance was accompanied by none of the far-ranging debate which had accompanied the decision to aid the Nicaraguan rebels in the 1980s. The continuing test of force between the great powers in the Mediterranean and the Middle East was creating its own reasons. The decision to aid the Yugoslav rebels was made in the context of events in Syria, not Slovenia. The United States greeted the developments in southern Europe as a golden opportunity to force the Soviet Union into a general retreat. The Soviet move into Yugoslavia had seemed to outflank the obstacles that U.S. diplomacy had placed between the Soviet Union and the Mediterranean. The insurgency in Yugoslavia provided a way to reverse this.

Significant quantities of U.S. supplies began reaching the PFFCS by January 1995 and contributed to a spectacular increase in the group's activities. Finding the Yugoslav government incapable of guaranteeing the security of its facilities, the U.S.S.R. increased its own presence in Yugoslavia. "Security" personnel in southern Yugoslavia swelled to division strength. At the same time, Yugoslav government troops began to mount full-scale military sweeps in the north in search of rebel forces. Both of these activities served principally to swell the ranks of the rebellion.

In addition, the Soviets began to take actions to prevent the insurgents from receiving supplies. Air and sea patrols of the Adriatic coast were increased and were carried out increasingly by Soviet, rather than Yugoslav, forces. This policy soon led to renewed clashes between Soviet and U.S. forces. In part because of their ostensibly covert nature, these encounters were the most brutal yet experienced between U.S. and Soviet forces. Small boats on both sides disappeared mysteriously, sunk by floating mines, or by gunfire from unidentified sources. Aerial clashes soon began to occur as U.S. warplanes based in Italy were called upon to protect ships in international waters off the Yugoslav coast. For the first time, events in Yugoslavia began to eclipse those in the Middle East.

It is difficult to define the precise moment when the Soviet Union became irrevocably committed to the survival of the Belgrade regime, but clearly this had taken place by the early months of 1995. The positive incentives for doing this were clear, since it enabled the U.S.S.R. to maintain the supply line to its forces in the Middle East as well as expanding its influence in southern Europe. These incentives, however, might not have been sufficient to induce the Soviets to risk a drawn-out conflict, if it had not been for the existence of compelling negative factors. By defending the Belgrade regime, the Soviet Union was sending a message to its allies throughout the world, and especially in Eastern Europe, that despite its recent checkered record in international affairs, it would still defend

allied regimes. Without such reassurances, the Soviet leadership now believed, the entire Soviet alliance system would face severe internal strains.

Through the winter and early spring of 1995, insurgent forces in Slovenia and Croatia enjoyed considerable success. Striking at night, they seemed able to inflict casualties at will while themselves remaining immune from attack. This success, and the hope of further Western support, encouraged the insurgents to take a spectacular step. On April 25, 1995, the PFFSC announced the independence of Slovenia and Croatia on its clandestine radio station, and called on the entire population of the two republics to rise up in support of the new government. The response was impressive: Within three days, most of the rural areas and smaller cities of the two republics were in the hands of insurgent forces. The Yugoslav army still held the major urban centers, however, and threatened to bring in massive reinforcements to crush what it considered a criminal rebellion.

At this point, the U.S. government was divided as to what course to follow. Military leaders were reluctant to risk long-term involvement in Yugoslavia. Others, however, pointed to the Soviet Union's increasing domestic problems and the so-far favorable U.S. experience in the Middle East confrontation as factors arguing for a bold response. The deciding factor turned out to be the reaction of the European nations. Somewhat to the surprise of the American government, which had grown accustomed to thinking of the European allies as overly cautious, it soon became apparent that the Europeans were very much in favor of assisting the break-away republics, because of the implications of a pro-Soviet Yugoslavia for the entire structure of relations in Europe.

The neutral status of Yugoslavia had been a central feature of the European power balance since the 1940s. The increasing Soviet dominance of the Belgrade government threatened to destroy that balance, or at least alter it considerably. The implications for the stability of the post-war arrangements elsewhere in Europe were staggering. The creation of pro-Western states in Croatia and Slovenia seemed to offer a way to redress the balance.

After several days of intensive consultations, the NATO countries simultaneously recognized the two independent republics on May 1, 1995. In the declaration which accompanied the statement of recognition, NATO denied any plans for military aggression, and stated that no troops would be sent to Yugoslavia. The pledge was contingent on Soviet behavior, however. Any hostile move against the new republics, the NATO countries warned, would be met with appropriate measures.

As expected, the reaction of the Soviet Union to this latest declaration was extremely unfavorable. The Soviet and Yugoslav federal governments, in separate

statements, declared that the so-called independent republics of Slovenia and Croatia were in a state of rebellion, and that the entire matter was a Yugoslav domestic problem with which Western interference would be highly inappropriate. On a more concrete level, Soviet air units began selective attacks in the new republics, clearly intended to coerce the civilian population into abandoning the separatist governments. NATO's response to this move was to begin openly supplying the new republics with air defense systems, including sophisticated ground-to-air missiles. Large quantities of humanitarian aid also began arriving in Croatia and Slovenia, much of it provided by private organizations in Western Europe.

The Belgrade government, denouncing this interference in Yugoslav affairs, announced that the new republics would be crushed and Yugoslav unity restored. The military aspect of this policy, however, seemed to be entirely in the hands of the Soviet Union, as the Yugoslav military units which had been occupying the cities of the north either retreated, deserted, or blockaded themselves at their bases to await rescue. Indeed, from this point onwards, the armed forces of the Belgrade government seemed to become entirely irrelevant. Western sources suspected that both the Serbian political leadership and the Soviet military commanders rightly doubted both the effectiveness and the loyalty of the remaining units of the Yugoslav army.

In the weeks which followed Western recognition of the new republics, the Soviet air offensive in the north was carried forward with increasing intensity. Instead of hitting urban areas, however, the Soviet air force began to concentrate on cutting off the new republics' sources of military equipment. Supply convoys were attacked both on land and in the Adriatic, with strikes made closer to the Italian border as time went by. This led to a new series of air incidents between Soviet and NATO units; losses on both sides rose steadily. At the same time, Soviet Category Two and Three divisions throughout Eastern Europe and the Western Military Districts of the U.S.S.R. began the process of building to full strength, and large numbers of Soviet troops were observed moving into Serbia from Hungary and Czechoslovakia, clearly preparing for a major push into Slovenia and Croatia.

NATO soon followed suit, systematically increasing the alert and readiness levels of its troops in Germany, Italy, and elsewhere. Three U.S. tactical air wings were moved to Europe and based in Italy, Turkey, and southern Germany. Preparations were begun to move additional air and ground units and to mobilize reserve forces. On May 14, the President of the United States issued a declaration stating directly that the U.S. and its allies would come to the defense of the new republics if they came under direct attack.

Given that the republics were in fact already under attack, this declaration may not have carried as much weight with the Soviet Union as it was meant to. After stepping up their aerial attacks for an additional week and meeting no further NATO reaction, except when Soviet aircraft strayed over NATO air space or attacked Western ships in international waters, the Soviets concluded that a massive ground offensive, if it achieved its goal quickly, would probably not bring an effective Western reaction. From a military point of view, this seemed to be a logical conclusion. While NATO's alert level had been raised and some air reinforcements moved to Europe, NATO forces had not been redeployed to positions from which they might make a large-scale move into Croatia. Had the Soviets, as they planned, succeeded in pacifying the new republics in a matter of a few days, it is possible that there would have been no time for a NATO reaction.

As it happened, however, the Soviet military operation did not gain the required overwhelming initial success. Ground forces began to move into the new republics on May 20, met stiff resistance from local forces, which included coherent units of the former Yugoslav army with their equipment and heavy weapons intact. Despite this, Soviet forces made good progress in the relatively open terrain of northeastern Croatia. Two thrusts were aimed at the Croatian capital of Zagreb, one from Hungary, which roughly followed the course of the major Budapest-to-Zagreb highway, the other from Serbia along the broad valley of the Sava river. The first column reached the outskirts of Zagreb on the 24th, and it was clear that the city could not be defended. The situations in Slovenia and in the Dalmatian regions of Croatia, however, were very different. Here, greater distances and more difficult terrain hampered the Soviet invaders, who were unable to employ the superior armored forces at their disposal effectively.

NATO reacted more swiftly than had been anticipated, as well. Air units intervened almost at once, and British, French and U.S. troops began moving on the first day of the Soviet offensive, and were in position by the fourth day. Elements of the French Rapid Action Force and the British Special Air Service were airlifted into Slovenia, while a U.S. Marine brigade from the Mediterranean made an unopposed landing at the Dalmatian port of Rijeka and began to move inland. At the same time, the U.S. 10th Division, additional Marine units, and additional tactical air wings in the United States were mobilized and preparations made to airlift them to Europe. Units of the 10th Infantry began to arrive in Europe on the 25th and were in combat two days later.

The Soviet government, despite NATO's many warnings, seemed surprised by this decisive response. It soon became apparent that the troops which it had committed to the

reconquest of northern Yugoslavia were inadequate to withstand a full-scale encounter with front-line NATO troops. Rather than accept a tactical defeat, the Soviet Union raised the stakes in a final effort to force the withdrawal of Western troops.

On June 1, 1995, Warsaw Pact forces in Eastern Europe began full mobilization. At the same time, a joint declaration of the heads of state of the Warsaw Pact nations, noting Western "aggression" in Yugoslavia, warned that all nations participating in this illegal act of war were subject to attack.

This move, as was its intent, put NATO in a difficult military situation. Although units in Germany were already at full readiness, their number was slightly diminished by the deployments to Yugoslavia, while the Soviet forces in East Germany and Poland, including fully mobilized reserves, were intact and receiving constant reinforcement. The transfer of additional units from the United States was initiated, particularly the dual-based divisions with pre-positioned equipment, and reserves continued to mobilize, but both steps would clearly take time.

Faced with this problem, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe requested and received permission to increase preparations to defend against a Soviet offensive, including the dispersal of NATO's tactical and intermediate-range nuclear weapons so that they would not risk being destroyed in a surprise attack. This action, unfortunately, was entirely misinterpreted by Soviet military leaders as preparation for a preemptive NATO attack. Rather than risk a NATO first strike, which potentially could have devastated the massed troop formations which were gathering in East Germany, the Soviets chose to initiate the war themselves. On June 5, 1995, Warsaw Pact troops crossed the inter-German border, while Soviet air and missile forces struck numerous military and logistical targets in Western Europe.

#### **THE DISPOSITION OF FORCES IN JUNE 1995**

Although the attention of both great powers shifted dramatically to events in Central Europe in the spring of 1995, ongoing confrontations in the Mediterranean and elsewhere remained important. One division of U.S. troops remained in Israel and Egypt, two tactical air wings were based in Israel and Eastern Turkey. These forces were supported by a greatly expanded U.S. Sixth Fleet, consisting of four carrier task forces and one surface action group, and two Marine amphibious brigades. Sixth Fleet had the additional task of supporting operations in Yugoslavia. Facing these forces were the Soviet units in Syria and Libya previously described, and the Soviet Mediterranean naval squadron, now based

in Kotor. The task of U.S. forces in the Mediterranean and Middle East remained the same as before the Yugoslav crisis, namely to support friendly governments, principally Israel and Turkey, and provide a counterweight to Soviet forces in the area. While the position of Israel was not seriously affected by the war in Europe, Turkey's Caucasus border and the Turkish Straits would be potential war zones.

In Yugoslavia, forces from the United States, France and the U.K were engaged in combat, with the French Rapid Action Force, a British Special Air Service regiment, and the U.S. 10th Infantry were deployed in Slovenia, covering the approaches to the capital of Ljubljana, while a reinforced U.S. Marine brigade and air wing held positions in northern Dalmatia. Four wings of NATO tactical aircraft in Italy provided support for these troops, along with two British Harrier squadrons based in Ljubljana and the U.S. Marine air wing. The objective of the Western forces was to make the cost of the Soviet intervention sufficiently great that the U.S.S.R. would seek a negotiated solution which recognized the partition of the country. At the time the war broke out on the central front, the Soviets had deployed six divisions into the country and comparable Frontal Aviation units. On the central front, both NATO and the Warsaw Pact were rapidly reinforcing their positions, with the latter having a one to two week advantage.

Farther afield, U.S. troops remained in Korea, Japan, and the Philippines in East Asia, Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, and Honduras and El Salvador in Central America; the latter were still engaged in anti-insurgency activities. Soviet troops were still carrying out their contested occupation of Afghanistan, and retained access to strategically-located facilities in Angola, Cuba, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Vietnam.

## **V. SCENARIO BETA: U.S. WEAKNESS LEADS TO CONFLICT IN 1995**

In this scenario, an initial period of American passivity leads the Soviet Union, as well as such regional powers as Syria and North Korea, to pursue aggressive opportunistic policies. In its attempt to deal with these multiple challenges, the United States overextends its forces and must resort to risky escalatory moves in order to maintain its forward positions and to safeguard its central forces, particularly in Europe. As in the previous chapter, the international context and political background of the conflict are derived by extrapolating existing trends and conditions. In this case, however, plausible developments in the United States and abroad lead to a much more hostile international environment.

The initial flashpoints in Scenario Beta are located in South and Southwest Asia. After Soviet interventions in Iraq and Pakistan which draw little in the way of effective U.S. retribution, both great powers become embroiled with the multiple factions contending for supremacy in post-Khomeini Iran. Great-power commitments in Iran lead to the deployment of U.S. and Soviet troops to that country, and isolated armed clashes between them, as well as related confrontations in Pakistan and the Arabian Peninsula, which in turn lead to new U.S. military commitments. The situation reaches a crisis point when North Korea and Syria, acting independently of each other and without the active support of the Soviet Union, choose to capitalize on what they perceive to be a U.S. overextension in Iran and the Indian Ocean, as well as on favorable local conditions, to strike at South Korea and Israel, respectively.

The U.S. decision to support its allies while maintaining the newly-established positions in the Indian Ocean, together with the ongoing necessity of maintaining a strong presence in Europe, leads the United States to carry out a series of major air and naval actions, culminating with a limited nuclear strike on North Korean forces. When the Soviet Union challenges these U.S. actions, which seem to the U.S.S.R.'s leaders to be threatening Soviet strategic assets, by sinking a U.S. aircraft carrier in the Sea of Japan, widespread air and naval conflict follows, including attacks by both powers on each other's territory.

The principal events leading up to U.S./Soviet conflict in 1995 are set out in the chronology below.

#### CHRONOLOGY

- 1987      Recession in the United States.  
Soviet intervention in support of Iraq in the Gulf War.
- 1987-88      Anti-American demonstrations in South Korea.
- 1988      Iraqi/Soviet air attacks shut off Iranian oil exports; Iran retaliates with terrorist attacks against Saudi and Kuwaiti oil facilities; oil prices begin to rise sharply.  
U.S.-backed "Contras" suffer military defeats; casualties among U.S. advisors in Honduras.  
U.S. Presidential election; new administration pledges to curtail U.S. foreign military interventions.  
Recession in Europe.  
Labour Party victory in British parliamentary elections.  
Radical factions in the Arab world (both Islamic fundamentalists and pro-Soviet leftists) gain strength.
- 1989      Severe protectionist legislation passed in the United States.  
(Gradual deterioration in Sino-American relations.)  
Political reform in South Korea stalls; opposition to the government is increasingly radicalized.  
U.S. announces gradual withdrawal of ground forces from South Korea.  
The U.S.S.R. increases its covert aid to Kurdish separatist factions in Iran.
- 1989-91      Recession in East Asia; especially severe in South Korea.

#### 1991

- Winter      Soviet ultimatum to Pakistan requiring the end of aid to the Afghan Mujaheddin; Pakistani request for additional U.S. aid is denied.
- Feb      Death of the Ayatollah Khomeini.
- Mar      Secret Iran/Iraq cease-fire negotiations begin.
- Apr      Afghan air force attacks targets inside Pakistan, leading to Afghan/Pakistani air clash.
- Apr/May:      Major Soviet offensive against the Mujaheddin inside Afghanistan.
- May 3:      Soviet air attacks on Pakistani refugee camps near Peshawar.
- May 10      Afghan and Soviet ground forces attack Afghan refugee camps inside Pakistan.
- May 12      Pakistan accedes to Soviet demands; Afghan refugees in Pakistan are disarmed and moved away from the border.
- Summer      Open opposition to the Iranian government mounts. The Soviet Union begins training and equipping Iranian dissidents.
- Sep      Martial law declared in South Korea.
- Fall      End of major military operations in the Gulf War.

#### 1992

Situation in Iran deteriorates; Azeri and Kurdish forces gain strength and begin open insurgency with covert Soviet and Iraqi support; Soviet-backed leftist forces receive large amounts of Soviet assistance.

#### 1993

- Apr      Iranian Army begins a major offensive against Kurdish and Azeri rebels.



May 5	Left-wing coup in Tehran; People's Democratic Republic of Iran (PDRI) proclaimed.
May 30	Iranian Army retakes Tehran; PDRI calls for Soviet assistance.
Jun 2	Soviet forces intervene in northern Iran.
Jun 10	Tehran retaken by Soviet/PDRI forces; Islamic government retreats to Isfahan; local forces in Khuzistan resist new regime and secure de facto autonomy.
Jun 15	Gulf Cooperation Council requests U.S. intervention in Iran.
Jun 20	First U.S. forces arrive in Khuzistan.
Fall	U.S. force in southern Iran grows to six Army and two Marine brigades, supported by four tactical air wings in Saudi Arabia and Oman.
Winter	Increasingly frequent clashes between U.S. and local forces in Iran.

#### 1994

Feb	U.S. aircraft begin carrying out attacks on leftist-held areas of Iran.
Feb 16	First U.S./Soviet air clash over Iran; subsequent clashes lead to U.S. and Soviet losses.
Spring	U.S. forces move to expand their zone of control in Iran.
Apr 1	Rebellion in Southern Oman; U.S. ground and air forces intervene in support of Omani government.
May	Baluchi population in western Pakistan begins open revolt.
May 20	United Republic of Baluchistan proclaimed, comprising portions of Iran and Pakistan.
May 24	U.S. aircraft begin operations in support of Pakistani government.
Jun	U.S. ground forces arrive in Pakistan.
Jul	Fighting in Pakistan spreads; Soviet troops directly involved.
Nov 1	North Korean forces attack South Korea.
Nov 5	U.S. forces in Korea cut off; Seoul threatened.
Nov 7	Small U.S. nuclear strike on North Korean forces in South Korea.
Dec	Military situation in Korea stabilized; two U.S. divisions and four tactical air wings deployed; North Korean attacks result in the loss of U.S. naval ships; partial call-up of U.S. reserve forces.

#### 1995

Mar 7	Syria and Jordan attack Israel beginning with a successful pre-emptive strike against the Israeli Air Force.
Mar 11	Leftist military coup in Egypt; new government repudiates peace treaty with Israel.
Mar 16	U.S. air units deployed to Israel; U.S.S.R. begins mobilization in Eastern Europe; NATO accelerates mobilization of reserves.
Mar 21	U.S. aircraft carry out additional nuclear strikes inside North Korea; Soviet forces retaliate by sinking a U.S. carrier in the Far East; Soviet strategic forces placed on alert.
Mar 22	U.S. strategic forces on alert; U.S. forces attack Soviet fleet assets throughout the Pacific, including the naval bases at Vladivostok and Petropavlovsk.

### THE EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL EVENTS: 1986-1990

The U.S./Soviet conflict which broke out in 1995 was the culmination of numerous long-term trends. In order to understand its sources, therefore, it is helpful to review the principal events of the preceding decade.

## **The United States**

The years 1987-88 were characterized in the United States by a deterioration of consensus on fundamental policy issues. Chief among these was the problem of the federal budget and, more generally, of economic policy. The severe problems of the U.S. agricultural and energy sectors, along with the still-sluggish performance of manufacturing, brought an end to the sustained growth which the U.S. economy had enjoyed since 1983. By 1987, the U.S. was in a recession, and its economy was significantly weaker than those not only of Japan, but also of the major European countries.

This economic downturn resulted in new and severe setbacks to efforts to control both the federal budget deficit and the foreign trade deficit. Lower-than-anticipated economic growth reduced government tax receipts significantly, thus propelling the fiscal deficit to new record levels. The competitive position of U.S. exports deteriorated farther as the budget deficit, by necessitating large volumes of new government borrowing, forced U.S. interest rates back up, which in turn sent dollar exchange rates back to the levels of the early 1980s.

Despite the president's opposition, a certain number of protectionist trade measures were enacted in 1987 and 1988. These were aimed ostensibly at the "unfair trading practices" of other nations, but were widely understood to be chiefly symbolic gestures intended to appease disgruntled constituents. Although these actions provided a small measure of relief to certain domestic producers, they elicited sharp condemnations from America's trading partners and did not alter the global trade position of the United States significantly.

The situation was exacerbated by a series of external economic problems, of which the most important was the renewed increase in the price of crude oil which began in 1988. Coming at a time when the U.S. economy was running out of momentum, the oil price hike emphasized the natural economic downturn and changed the economic outlook for the U.S. dramatically.

On the political side, the economic situation put pressure on the federal government to reverse domestic spending cuts, previously enacted in the interest of a balanced budget. This pressure came from various constituent groups, but more significantly from state and local governments, which found themselves cut off from federal funds precisely at a time when demands for social services, especially unemployment compensation and state-run welfare programs, was reaching record levels.

This situation led to renewed calls for substantial cuts in military spending as a means of attacking both the deficit problem and the perceived shortfall in social services.

The presidential election of 1988 was dominated by economic and budgetary problems. Except for the purely budgetary aspect of military spending, foreign policy issues played a relatively small role. The administration which took office in 1989 was pledged to take swift measures to improve the economic position of American workers, to correct the foreign trade deficit and, over the longer term, to reverse the trend towards ever-larger budget deficits. Its foreign policy positions were much more vague, their general thrust being the avoidance of U.S. military intervention abroad.

Once in office, the administration moved first to deal with trade problems, going far beyond the measures taken by its more free-market-oriented predecessor. A number of far-reaching measures were enacted to protect U.S. industries and agriculture including an increase in certain tariffs and a wide assortment of quantitative restrictions on products ranging from automobiles and steel to shoes and textiles. These measures resulted in a sharp decrease in the volume of U.S. imports, although they had little short-term effect on exports.

The major immediate move on budgetary issues was a freeze on defense spending in nominal dollars, resulting in a real decrease in U.S. defense spending for the first time in over ten years. As a result, a number of military procurement programs which had been proposed in the latter part of the Reagan administration were either postponed or cancelled outright. Of more practical importance was the drop in operational funds, resulting in lower ammunition and fuel purchases, less extensive training and exercises and, in general, a lower level of international visibility for U.S. forces. These restrictions were consistent with the new administration's desire to avoid foreign military entanglements in order to concentrate on domestic economic problems.

The budgetary and trade measures taken by the administration were generally popular, and were credited with the gradual improvement of the U.S. economy. The president was reelected in 1992 and pledged to continue the major policy orientations of his first term.

### **Western Europe**

The international economic conditions that caused problems for the U.S. also were felt in Europe. Renewed high energy prices and the recession in the United States led to a deterioration in the international trade position of most European nations, ending the

economic recoveries which had begun in those countries only in 1985. As a result, the high unemployment rates which had plagued Europe since the early 1980s continued to rise.

These economic problems contributed to a period of political instability in the major countries of Western Europe as incumbent governments witnessed a continuing erosion of their political credibility. The late 1980s witnessed a number of important electoral victories for opposition political parties, of which the most significant was that of the British Labour Party in 1988. The Christian Democratic Party retained power in the West German elections in 1987, but its parliamentary position was extremely precarious. Although a coalition of conservative parties ruled France, elections held in that country in 1988 resulted in the resurgence of the French Communist Party and continued growth of the far-right National Front. All of these governments were inclined to be considerably less supportive of U.S. policies than their predecessors had been. In particular, European governments were anxious to avoid jeopardizing their economic and political relations with the countries of Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

#### **The Soviet Union and East Europe**

The Soviet economic situation began to show signs of slow improvement in the late 1980s as General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev became increasingly bold in the scope of his reforms. While the U.S.S.R. lagged far behind the West in most industrial and technological sectors, this relative resurgence was sufficient to ensure continued Soviet economic domination of Eastern Europe, as well as permitting the Soviet Union to play an increasingly active role in the third world. Moreover, the Soviet Union benefited from the resurgence in oil prices, since energy products constitute the principal Soviet export. The favorable terms of trade enjoyed by the Soviet Union in the energy sector enabled the U.S.S.R. to negotiate a number of "energy-for-technology" barter arrangements with European countries which supported the gradual modernization of the Soviet Union's industrial base.

The countries of Eastern Europe shared unequally in this relative prosperity. The D.D.R. built successfully on its special relationship with West Germany to acquire advanced Western production technology and necessary credits. This allowed it to trade industrial goods to the Soviet Union for low-cost oil and natural gas, which in turn contributed to keeping production costs low and made certain East German goods competitive in the West. Hungary's diversified economy, particularly its rich agricultural

sector, allowed it, too, to maintain profitable trade relations with both the U.S.S.R. and the West.

In Poland, continuing social unrest and the growing obsolescence of the industrial base hampered all attempts at economic recovery while the government's repressive policies alienated potential Western lenders, leaving the Polish government entirely dependent on the Soviet Union for economic and political support. The repressive methods of the Polish government, while incurring the displeasure of the West, were brutally effective, however, at least in the short term. The remaining East European countries fell somewhere between these extremes. Czechoslovakia attempted, with mixed success, to follow the East German example while Rumania continued to suffer the effects of a decade of economic mismanagement by its erratic leaders. Yugoslavia, although hampered by internal tensions, continued to exploit its unique position between East and West to receive support from both sides. This relative tranquility in Eastern Europe left Soviet leaders free to pursue opportunities elsewhere in the world.

## **Africa**

The situation throughout the African continent in the late 1980s and early 1990s differed little from the state of affairs ten years earlier. In the Republic of South Africa, large scale upheavals on the part of the country's black majority were matched by increasingly brutal tactics by the white minority government. The regime increased the sophistication of its techniques somewhat, removing some of the more obvious symbols of apartheid without affecting the fundamental operation of the system. This, along with the continuation of strict control over the media, resulted in a slight improvement in South Africa's international image. Regionally, however, it remained a pariah whose neighbors dealt with only indirectly.

This local hostility was felt particularly in Angola and Mozambique, where South Africa continued to support anti-government insurgencies. Although UNTA in Angola and RENAMO in Mozambique made little progress in their efforts to overthrow the governments in Luanda and Maputo, their continued existence provided an important source of leverage for South Africa, as well as a steady drain on the economies of neighboring states.

Elsewhere on the continent, the most significant change was an improvement in the government of Ethiopia's military position in its struggle against separatist movements, particularly in Eritrea. This was due not so much to the government's military success as

to the ruthlessly effective way in which it exploited the drought and famine of the mid-1980s. By transferring large segments of the population and denying food shipments to those regions whose people proved particularly intractable, the government succeeded in destroying the greater part of the rebel forces' power base. Increased Soviet and Cuban military assistance in the late 1980s finished the task.

### **Latin America**

The late 1980s witnessed a gradual reversal of U.S. policy towards Central America, as the interventionism of the earlier part of the decade gave way to a more detached approach, largely because of the military and diplomatic reverses of the Nicaraguan "Contras." Despite U.S. military assistance in 1987 and 1988, "Contra" forces proved incapable of carrying out effective operations inside Nicaragua, while the Nicaraguan government became considerably more aggressive in pressing attacks against the rebels' base camps inside Honduras. The Sandinistas' greatest success, however, was not military but political. U.S. military planners were confident in 1987 and 1988 that the tactical situation could be reversed by the introduction of U.S. air defense units, possibly including interceptor aircraft. The government of Honduras refused to permit such activities on its territory, however, being convinced that they would risk the further destabilization of the region. After 1988, the new U.S. administration drastically diminished U.S. support for the "Contras," providing only indirect humanitarian aid to "refugee populations" in Central America.

While this move did not, as some had feared, lead immediately to a dramatic realignment in Central America, it is clear that U.S. influence in the region diminished. Costa Rica returned to its traditional policy of strict neutrality, while the governments of Guatemala and Panama also sought a neutralist course. Although Honduras and El Salvador remained closely aligned with the United States, both also sought to improve relations with Cuba and Nicaragua.

In South America, the economic downturn of the late 1980s caused considerable difficulties for the economic reform and modernization programs underway in several countries, of which the most important were Brazil and Argentina. A number of these countries effectively defaulted on large portions of their foreign debt, through a series of "negotiated settlements" with various foreign lenders. As a result, foreign financing became nearly impossible to obtain for these countries, necessitating a renewed emphasis on austerity and self-sufficiency.

## **The Far East**

U.S. trade policy decisions had a particularly notable effect on the fortunes of the nations of East Asia, as it cut severely into their export prospects. This led to sharp recessions in the most trade-dependent Asian economies, particularly Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea. Even the much stronger Japanese economy experienced a substantial decline in growth in the years 1988 and 1989.

U.S.-Japanese relations were strained by conflicts over trade questions, but more fundamental economic and political issues also worked to separate the two nations. Increasingly, Japan and the United States found themselves competing for markets and influence throughout Asia. As Japan followed an increasingly independent foreign policy line, the goals and priorities of the two nations came into open conflict more frequently.

Japan's relations with the U.S.S.R., in particular, were a subject of considerable disagreement between Washington and Tokyo. The general improvement in the Soviet economy made the Soviet Union a more attractive customer for Japanese products, while Japan, in turn, provided an important hard-currency market for the Soviet Union's Siberian oil and gas fields. Indeed, Japanese investment and technology were critical in increasing the production from these rich, but remote and technically-difficult, sources of energy.

Even more disturbing in the short term were developments in Taiwan. Although the island's more balanced economy did not suffer from the decline in U.S. imports to the extent that South Korea did, its prosperity was nonetheless diminished by the general downturn of the global economy. At the same time, an important generational shift was taking place in Taipei. The great majority of Taiwan's new leaders, whether of mainland or Taiwanese origin, had been born on the island, and saw Taiwan's future more as an independent nation than as part of China. Although these leaders prudently avoided any open declaration of independence and continued to maintain at least the appearance of dialogue with the mainland, the evolution of attitudes in Taipei did not go unnoticed in Beijing.

The government of the People's Republic of China, as might be expected, was greatly disturbed. There had been considerable hope in Beijing that the reassertion of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong, which took place in 1989, would serve as a first step towards the more significant reunion with Taiwan. When it became clear that this was unlikely to happen, Chinese policy became rather less accommodating. Harsh anti-Taiwanese rhetoric became again commonplace in the pronouncements of mainland leaders.

Deng Xiaoping's successors were also less enthusiastic about the prospects of China's opening to the West. The disappointing performance of Chinese exports, along with the fear that too rapid economic change was causing social unrest, led these leaders to curtail economic and social contacts with the West in the early 1990s. The unwillingness of the United States to put pressure on Taiwan to steer away from an independent course only hastened this trend in Chinese policy.

Chinese relations with the U.S.S.R., on the other hand, improved over the course of the late 1980s and early 1990s. This was due in large part to a concerted Soviet diplomatic effort. Considerable Soviet economic and technical assistance was made available to China, and small reductions of Soviet troops were made in the Far East. Serious differences remained between the two countries, centering around the involvement of both in several third-country conflicts; however, China continued to support the Khmer Rouge insurgents in Kampuchea in their struggle against the Soviet- and Vietnamese-backed regime in Phnom Penh, while Soviet involvement in Afghanistan drew continued Chinese criticism.

The most critical developments for U.S. policy in the Far East, however, took place in Korea. In the years following 1986, anti-American feelings ran high in South Korea, finding expression at both the official and popular levels. Anti-American street demonstrations in South Korean cities were frequent in 1987 and 1988. More alarmingly, a series of bomb attacks were carried out against American military installations and American-owned economic targets. While both the U.S. and the South Korean governments blamed these incidents on North Korean agents, it was clear that the actions were, at least in part, the work of radical elements within South Korea.

The South Korean government became increasingly worried that the popular unrest would explode into widespread violence with the approach of the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. In an effort to appease the opposition, Korean president Chung Doo Whan tried to distance himself from the United States and to gain the support of Korean nationalists for his regime. In taking this position, President Chung was supported by the Korean business community, which had suffered considerably from U.S. trade policies, as well as by elements in the armed forces who were strongly nationalistic and increasingly resentful of what they perceived as excessive American control over Korean security policy. President Chung's policy was successful in the short term, and the Olympics were held without major disruptions. After 1988, however, the balancing act began to fall apart as forces on both the left and right put increasing pressure on the government.



Indirect presidential elections were held in Korea in 1988. To no one's surprise, the winner was President Chung's chosen successor, whose candidacy was strongly supported by the armed forces. The new president reiterated the promise to move toward a more open political system, including direct election of the next president, but announced his intention of serving out the entirety of his own four-year term. This angered the main opposition leaders, grouped in the New Korean Democratic Party (NKDP), who threatened to boycott the entire constitutional process, thus depriving it of legitimacy, and to organize a non-violent, civil disobedience campaign against the government.

At the same time, the more radical opposition, based primarily in small student groups, became steadily more violent in its tactics. The government responded with harsh repressive measures, which led to widely-publicized human rights abuses. U.S. condemnation of these incidents further fueled nationalistic anti-Americanism in South Korea.

Faced with this situation, and consistent with its stated policy of reducing America's military presence abroad, the U.S. administration inaugurated in 1989 announced that its long-term goal was the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces from Korea, although the new president asserted that U.S. commitments to the defense of South Korea would be respected. As a first step in the process of American disengagement, a detailed schedule of troop withdrawals was established in the summer of 1989. It provided for a steady redeployment of battalion-sized ground units out of Korea beginning in 1990, with the total withdrawal of U.S. ground forces projected for 1996. The administration's plan did not call for the withdrawal of U.S. tactical air units from Korea, however. Measures were taken in early 1989 to dissolve the joint operational command of U.S. and South Korean troops in the Peninsula.

The U.S. decision to withdraw its ground forces received a mixed reaction in Seoul. Among Korean elites, extremists of both the left and right hailed it as a great victory, while more moderate forces, including both the government and the NKDP, were alarmed at the potential repercussions of a U.S. pull-out. On the popular level, however, the sharp recession which followed the U.S. trade policy decisions of 1989 had caused widespread antagonism directed against both the United States and the Seoul government. The net result of these various trends was the increasing fragmentation and destabilization of South Korean society and, at the same time, the blocking of all efforts towards political liberalization. The increasing violence of the far left provided a ready excuse for the government and the Army to delay democratic reforms, which in turn weakened moderate opposition forces at the expense of more radical elements. Under these conditions, military

and political leaders concluded in September 1991, that it would be impossible to hold elections in 1992 and reimposed martial law. The current president's term was extended "for the duration of the emergency." After this, Korean politics settled into a seemingly unending cycle of violent demonstrations and harsh repression.

Relations with Washington sank to a new low with the imposition of martial law, and there were calls in the U.S. for an immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces. American military leaders, however, disturbed by what they saw as an increasingly dangerous international climate, prevailed on the administration not to exceed the tempo of its previously announced schedule of withdrawals; indeed, the pace of redeployment was slowed somewhat. Although it was not widely publicized, this slow-down meant that at least a token ground force would remain in Korea after 1996.

Although little was known about the inner workings of the North Korean government, it is clear that these developments were monitored closely in Pyongyang. Increasingly, it appeared that some, although by no means all, of the more violent attacks on installations and military personnel in South Korea were planned--and perhaps carried out--by North Korean agents. The North Korean Army, however, carefully avoided overt provocations along the demilitarized zone, seeking through this strategy both to avoid actions that could lead the United States to halt its withdrawals from the South and to turn the attention of the South Korean Army increasingly inward by working to raise the level of social conflict.

### **The Middle East**

The late 1980s were a time of increasing tension and considerable violence in the Middle East. Israel continued to be the principal ally of the United States in the region, but faced serious economic problems and internal divisions. In general, the late 1980s saw a resurgence of the hard right, symbolized by Ariel Sharon, which opposed any concession to Arab or Palestinian demands, trusting rather to the strength of Israel's armed forces and the divisions in the Arab world to ensure Israel's security. Such positions were not well received in Washington, where the new U.S. administration was trying to improve relations with the Arab world, and a cooling of U.S./Israeli relations followed.

While the experiences of the various Arab states differed considerably, regional trends could be defined. Important among these, and exacerbating the rest, was economic instability. The overwhelming dependence of the region's strongest economies on oil production left the entire area at the mercy of shifts in the international petroleum market.

After the boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the oil price drop of 1985-86 left not only the major oil producers, but also their regional economic partners (primarily Egypt, Jordan, the Sudan, and Pakistan) in strained circumstances. While oil prices rose again in the later 1980s, these increases were caused in large part by disruptions in Middle East oil production, and thus did not bring economic benefits similar to those of the earlier period of strong energy prices. In turn, this difficult and uncertain economic situation worsened existing social tensions.

One manifestation of popular dissatisfaction was the continued rise of Islamic fundamentalism, which was felt throughout the Middle East. This movement was not limited to the Iranian-backed Shi'ite groups which had been prominent in the earlier part of the decade. Although Shi'ite agitation continued, especially in Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria, a number of Sunni fundamentalist groups rose to prominence as well. These last were most active in Egypt, the Gulf states, and the Sudan, as well as Pakistan and the countries of north Africa. Except in Lebanon, the tactics used by fundamentalists tended more towards political pressure and large-scale popular demonstrations than violent or terrorist tactics, and they had a considerable impact on a number of key policies. The most important, from the viewpoint of U.S. policy, was to make it even more difficult for any Arab state to align itself publicly with the United States. While fundamentalist groups tended to oppose all non-Islamic influences, including that of the Soviet Union, U.S. support for Israel, clearly made America the preferred great power target.

The governments of Egypt and of the pro-Western states of the Gulf were placed in a difficult position by this development. They had long considered their close relationship with the West to be a necessary hedge against Soviet intimidation, but were now forced to consider whether this relationship might not become a net liability at some point. Initially, these governments took care to distance themselves from U.S. positions on purely regional issues, principally the questions of relations with the State of Israel and the role of the Palestinians, while remaining closer to the U.S. on matters of great power relations.

Another force felt throughout the Middle East was the rise of left-wing dissidents. Unlike the fundamentalists, leftist groups did not rely on mass support, but rather tended to employ violent confrontationalist tactics. Further, while fundamentalist groups were primarily locally based and largely fragmented, a number of specific centers could be defined as the source of left-wing violence. Chief among these were Libya, Syria, and the various Palestinian groups protected by those two countries. Although the Soviet Union publicly denied all ties to such activities, American analysts were convinced that Soviet materiel and tactical support was made available to these groups. Attacks were carried out

initially against Israeli and Western targets in Europe and the Middle East. Over time, however, the saboteurs turned to the moderate Arab states. A wave of assassinations and sabotage hit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, and Egypt in 1987 and 1988. The resulting damage to oil production and transfer facilities contributed in no small way to the renewed rise in the price of oil.

Egypt experienced a left-wing resurgence of a somewhat different order as certain groups, particularly within the military, sought to reassert the goals and methods of the late Gamal Abdel Nasser as means of opposing not only the pro-Western tilt of the then-current Egyptian government, but also the popularly-based fundamentalists. This group was openly pro-Soviet and sought ties with the military-dominated leftist regimes of Syria and Libya.

Libya, meanwhile, had continued a steady evolution from regional maverick to dependable Soviet client and ally. Although Colonel Qadafi remained as head-of-state, power was concentrated exclusively within the armed forces and outside observers speculated that the Colonel had become primarily a figurehead. A concrete result of this evolution in Libyan policy--and one of the most troubling developments in the entire region from the U.S. point of view--was that the Soviet Union was granted broad access to the Libyan naval base at Tobruk, which became a principal staging and supply point for the Soviet Mediterranean squadron, and to the former Wheelus air base.

Syria, as we have noted, was the other major Soviet ally in the Middle East. The relative decline in the freedom of action of Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the late 1980s worked to Syria's advantage as it sought to gain a regional leadership role. This effort was aided by the prestige which Syria derived from its position as the principal military power arrayed against Israel, its effective hegemony over Lebanon, and its close ties to the most visible of the Palestinian factions. Syria's more powerful role, however, was resented by Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Both of these countries also linked Syria to their domestic problems.

The net result of these trends was the increasingly hostile division of the Arab world into two factions. On one side were the pro-Soviet governments of Syria, Libya, and South Yemen as well as the radical Palestinian factions, the Egyptian neo-Nasserites, and left-wing terrorist groups throughout the Middle East. On the other side were the moderate regimes of Egypt, Jordan, and the Persian Gulf. Both sides tended necessarily towards anti-Americanism. Ironically, however, it was their interaction that allowed the United States to maintain a degree of influence in the region. As the perceived threat from leftist forces grew, the governments of Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula sought to assure

themselves of U.S. support, while at the same time favoring fundamentalist forces in domestic, social and economic issues.

At the edge of the Arab world, Iraq found itself caught between these two trends, since it maintained close links both with the Soviet Union and with the conservative states of the Arabian Peninsula. The gradual deterioration of its military position in the continuing war with Iran, however, forced the Iraqi government to move decisively closer to the Soviet Union in 1987-88.

Iranian offensives in 1987, while gaining relatively little territory, inflicted extensive casualties on the already-depleted Iraqi army. By the autumn of 1987, the position of the Baghdad government was critical, and military leaders warned that unless something was done to alter the current military balance, the next major Iranian offensive would likely shatter the Iraqi army. In this desperate situation, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein appealed to the Soviet Union for direct military assistance. In doing this, President Hussein moved Iraq fully into the Soviet camp, effectively ending any hope of improved relations with the moderate states, and in particular of any further financial support from Saudi Arabia. That he was willing to do this is a measure both of Iraq's desperate military situation and of the increasingly sharp ideological cleavage dividing the Arab world.

Moscow was swift in answering Hussein's request. Soviet leaders had observed the evolution of the Gulf war with growing apprehension, fearing that the defeat of Iraq would lead to a major decline in Soviet influence throughout the Middle East. The opportunity to intervene directly in Iraq made it possible to turn the situation to Soviet advantage by binding Iraq into a much closer alliance with the U.S.S.R.

By the first months of 1988, the Soviet intervention was having a clear effect on the military situation. Supplies of military equipment increased in quantity and quality. Although no ground forces or organic air units were introduced, large numbers of advisors and technicians accompanied the sophisticated weapon systems which were supplied. More importantly, Soviet pilots began to fly combat missions in Soviet-supplied Iraqi Air Force planes. Initially, these missions consisted chiefly of close air support of the Iraqi Army. Using sophisticated anti-personnel munitions, Soviet pilots inflicted extensive casualties on the Iranian forces occupying the relatively open ground along the southern portions of the front, forcing them to retreat to more sheltered positions and thus relieving the pressure on the Iraqi Army.

Having achieved this initial objective, Soviet and Iraqi air power turned to the task of disrupting Iran's economy by destroying oil production and shipment facilities. Efforts along this line made by the Iraqis earlier in the war had enjoyed only limited success, but the introduction of Soviet personnel and additional Soviet equipment made possible a much more methodical and effective campaign. Especially important in this regard was the introduction of Soviet medium-range missiles, capable of striking virtually all Iranian oil facilities, including the critical tanker terminal of Kharg Island, from positions inside Iraq. By the late summer of 1988, these tactics had succeeded in effectively shutting off Iranian oil exports, as well as inflicting serious damage to Iran's oil production facilities.

Soviet/Iraqi air power was also used in a largely successful attempt to impose a blockade of all shipping--oil-related and otherwise--into and out of Iranian ports. Initially, this tactic led to the sinking of a number of neutral ships, although none from the U.S., but these losses dropped as nations chose to stop sending ships into the Iraqi-declared war zone. A final use of Soviet/Iraqi air superiority was the resumption of periodic attacks on major Iranian cities, as the Iraqis and their Soviet allies sought to bring the war home to the people of Iran, thus putting additional pressure on the Tehran government to end hostilities definitively.

A separate aspect of Soviet strategy in the Gulf was the exploitation and encouragement of political instability within Iran. This long-term policy grew out of the failure of the Soviet Union to achieve any sort of rapprochement with the Iranian government, and had been underway for some time prior to the Soviet intervention in Iraq. After the intervention, Soviet covert efforts were intensified and concentrated in the northwestern regions of Iran, inhabited by Kurdish and Azeri populations. The deterioration of the general military position of the Tehran government contributed to the increased success of Soviet-backed dissidents in these areas from 1988 onwards.

Other aspects of the altered military situation also threatened the Tehran government. The Iraqi blockade, coming after the oil price fall of 1985-86, put severe strains on the Iranian economy. For the first time since the beginning of the war with Iraq, it became impossible for the Iranian government to maintain even the appearance of a peace-time economy. Compounding the Iranian government's problems was the resurgence--due in part to economic problems--of active political opposition from a number of sources. In addition to the ethnically-based separatist groups mentioned above, leftist forces, which had been virtually eradicated in the early 1980s, reappeared in Tehran and other urban centers, although initially in small numbers.

On the military level, Iran's situation was serious but not yet desperate. While overwhelming Soviet/Iraqi air power had made further offensive actions impossible, there had been little in the way of Iraqi counter-offensives on land. By far the most serious blow to Iran had been the disruption of its oil exports, particularly the destruction of Kharg Island. While unable to prevent this, Iran retained an ability to retaliate. Recognizing that Iraqi/Soviet air superiority made air attacks unfeasible, Iran sponsored the sabotage of oil production facilities not only in Iraq, but throughout the Gulf in early 1989. Facilities in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the U.A.E. were attacked both by Iranian agents and by local Shi'ite extremists. While the military and economic impact of these attacks were in no way comparable to that of the Soviet/Iraqi air strikes on Iran, they contributed to the general disruption of Gulf oil production.

These developments also led to the deterioration of relations between the moderate Gulf states and Iraq. The Saudis, in particular, had been apprehensive about the consequences of the new Soviet presence in Iraq, although they grudgingly had accepted its necessity, given Iraq's military situation. The renewed increase in Iranian-backed terrorism, however, convinced the Saudis and their neighbors that the escalation of the Gulf War, even if it led to an eventual Iraqi victory, could well prove to be a direct threat to their interests.

The conservative nations of the Gulf, however, were in no position to seek a more visible U.S. presence in the region to balance the Soviet actions. Nor did the new American administration show any inclination in this direction. The few U.S. moves which were taken, of which the most important were a series of naval exercises in the Arabian Sea and brief and little-publicized visits of F-15 squadrons to Oman, came in response to Iranian actions, not to the Soviet presence in Iraq. The countries of the Arabian Peninsula were left to deal as best they could with an increasingly violent regional environment.

### **The Great Powers in 1991**

By the beginning of 1991, the two powers found themselves in very different positions. The United States Government, preoccupied with domestic matters, sought above all to avoid foreign entanglements involving a prospect of military conflict. The dominant view in the administration was that the use of U.S. military assets abroad tended to be counterproductive, leading to severe domestic reactions in the event of U.S. casualties, and in any case, tending in the long term to encourage opposition to U.S. policies abroad rather than helping to ensure American influence. The president had set

forth this theme in his campaign, and considered his election a signal that a majority of Americans agreed.

This policy of nonintervention was reinforced strongly by the attitudes of America's principal allies in Europe and the Far East. Germany and Japan, while maintaining a consistently pro-U.S. line in political and security matters, pursued expanded economic and political relations with East-bloc nations. The Labour government in Great Britain, particularly, was openly antagonistic to what it perceived as a traditional U.S. tendency towards unnecessary interventions, and had made it clear that it would not support U.S. "adventurism" in the third world. Relations with Seoul were also a major problem for the U.S., yet despite the turmoil in South Korea, Japan also remained strongly in favor of a policy of nonintervention.

Soviet leaders, on the other hand, felt that the time was right for both the liquidation of certain outstanding problems and the pursuit of new opportunities. By 1990, The U.S.S.R.'s actions vis-a-vis Iran and Iraq were crystallizing into a broader Soviet policy towards the greater Southwest Asian region. As the Soviet domestic situation improved, giving leaders in Moscow more freedom of action in foreign policy initiatives, they turned increasingly to Southwest Asia as a region with both problems to be solved and opportunities to be exploited. The most urgent problem for Soviet planners was the continuing conflict in Afghanistan. Opportunities were already being exploited in Iraq. In the longer term, however, both Iran and Pakistan were potential targets.

## **THE EVOLUTION OF GREAT POWER CONFRONTATION, 1990-1995**

Soviet policy in South and Southwest Asia would lead eventually to a number of great power confrontations in that critical region and, in the end, contribute greatly to the broader U.S./Soviet conflict. The roots of this conflict can be traced to Soviet actions in Pakistan in 1990.

### **Soviet Initiatives in South Asia, 1990**

More than ten years after the initial Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, an active resistance remained in the field. In the analysis of Soviet planners, the relative success of the Mujaheddin was due to two factors. The first was access to sanctuaries in Pakistan for the protection of non-combatants and the training of guerilla bands. The second was the rebels' access to sophisticated Western weapons. These two factors, moreover, were linked closely, since the supply of military equipment to the Mujaheddin was dependent on



at least tacit Pakistani cooperation. The key to success, Soviet analysts had long concluded, was the neutralization of Pakistan.

In 1991, this seemed possible for the first time. After noting the apparent unconcern of the U.S. administration with events in the Persian Gulf, Soviet leaders concluded that the United States would not intervene in South Asia unless pressed to do so by its European or Japanese allies who, in the present situation, were more likely to oppose military action than to support it.

In January and February of 1990, the Soviet ambassador in Islamabad delivered a series of messages to the Pakistani president "suggesting" in increasingly insistent terms that Pakistan reconsider its commitment to the Afghan rebels. The Soviets made two specific demands: i) The Afghan refugee camps should be moved away from the border and the border should be closed; ii) Pakistan should not permit the transfer of U.S. arms bound for Afghanistan through its territory.

The Pakistani government did not respond directly to the Soviet demands, but took steps to counter the veiled threats by requesting additional military aid and political support from the United States. The American response was equivocal, with a strong group of U.S. officials both in the administration and the Congress voicing the opinion that the Pakistani request was motivated more by internal problems there than by Soviet threats, and that additional aid to Pakistan would be unwise under the circumstance.

Despite the unpromising response from Washington, the government of Pakistan chose to resist the Soviet demands to the extent of its ability to do so. This was not due to any overwhelming commitment to the cause of the Afghan rebels, but rather to the Pakistani Army's conclusion that if it appeared to give in to Soviet pressure its precarious hold on power in Islamabad would be eroded farther, and perhaps dangerously so.

Faced with this intransigent attitude on the part of the Pakistanis, the Soviets turned up the pressure. In early April 1990, aircraft of the Afghan Air Force began carrying out attacks against guerilla positions in Pakistan, just over the Afghan border. On April 10 the Pakistani Air Force attempted to intercept the attackers, and both sides suffered casualties in the ensuing aerial battle.

Pakistani and U.S. protests over this incident went unheeded in Moscow and Kabul, and the Afghan government announced the start of a major campaign to destroy the rebel forces once and for all. Soviet and Afghan forces went on the offensive throughout the country in late April, deploying an unprecedented number of Soviet troops in the process. As expected, this resulted in a renewed flow of Afghan refugees into Pakistan.

Then, on May 3, Afghan Air Force planes carried out a major attack against the largest refugee camps near the Pakistani city of Peshawar. Once again, both the Pakistani and Afghan Air Forces lost planes. In this case, however, a number of the downed "Afghan" aircraft were found to have been flown by Soviet pilots.

The Pakistani government again protested the Soviet's behavior, now offering proof of the direct involvement of the Soviet Union in aggression against Pakistan. This case was made especially in Washington, where Pakistan's request for emergency military assistance was repeated urgently. The Pakistani government insisted that it was not requesting U.S. military personnel, only equipment. In particular, it sought additional front-line military aircraft and improved air defense systems. The administration and Congress, however, were still reluctant to involve the United States more directly in this problem. The shipment of weapons and military supplies which had already been approved for transfer to Pakistan was expedited, but no additional support was forthcoming.

On May 10, Soviet and Afghan ground units crossed the Pakistani border and attacked Afghan refugee camps for several hours before withdrawing. At the same time, units of the Soviet Air Force openly struck Pakistani military positions along the border. The political message conveyed by these two limited attacks was clear. The Soviet Union was prepared to put open military pressure on Pakistan, confident that no escalation would result.

After hurried negotiations, Pakistan agreed not to permit belligerent activities to be carried out from its territory, although it would continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees already in Pakistan. For their own safety, all Afghan refugees would be moved away from the border and, in the future, joint Afghan/Pakistani patrols would ensure that the border between the two countries was closed to belligerents and armed forces of all kinds. The Pakistani government also informed the United States privately that it would no longer be possible for U.S. covert assistance to the Mujaheddin to be funnelled through Pakistan.

The longer term impact of the Soviet/Pakistani clash was to weaken the position of the Pakistani government internally and internationally, as well as to create severe strains between Pakistan and the United States. The movement of Afghan refugees into the interior of Pakistan proved especially disruptive, as many of them settled in and around Pakistan's major cities rather than relocating to new camps.

The Soviet position in Afghanistan, while improved, was not entirely secure, however. While sanctuary in Pakistan was no longer available to them, the Mujaheddin continued to operate in their traditional mountain strongholds and in the southwestern regions of Afghanistan, near the Iranian border. Although they posed little threat to Soviet control of the rest of Afghanistan, the existence of these forces, and their links to Iran provided both an annoyance and a further opportunity for Soviet policy in the region.

### **The Disintegration of Iran, 1991-1992**

The death of the Ayatollah Khomeini, in February 1991, was a turning point for events throughout Southwest Asia. It marked the beginning of a series of crises in Iran which culminated in civil wars and foreign intervention. A succession procedure had been determined long before the Imam's death, and initially it appeared to be proceeding smoothly. The Iranian parliament and cabinet continued to operate, as before, under the supervision of a small group of Shi'ite religious leaders led by Khomeini's chosen successor. It quickly became apparent, however, that while the mechanism of government might be functioning, the unique role of Khomeini as a focus for loyalty and obedience was sorely lacking. Opposition to the regime, while of long standing, heretofore had been deep beneath the surface; it now burst forth openly from several directions at once.

The most visible sign was the resurgence of political opposition in the capital and other major urban areas. Cells of both the Iranian Mujaheddin and the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party reappeared, although both continued to be the target of repression. Certain opposition leaders were permitted to return from exile, while others reentered the country clandestinely. Although their committed following was still very small, these groups gathered considerable popular support by spearheading the movement to end the war with Iraq.

In fact, the Iranian government was attempting to do just that. In March 1991, secret negotiations began in Kuwait between Iranian and Iraqi envoys for the purpose of reaching a cease-fire agreement. The existence of these talks, however, was unknown not only to the world at large, but also to the Iranian regular army. The new Iranian government was uncertain of the army's likely reaction to a cease-fire and, in the unsettled state of affairs, preferred to wait until progress was made in the talks before bringing the military into the process.

The need to end the war was increasingly obvious. Not only was Iran's economy being strangled by the Iraqi blockade, but ethnic insurgency in the northwest was

beginning to reach serious proportions. Operating from sanctuaries inside Iraq, Kurdish and Azeri rebels carried out increasingly serious attacks on Iranian military positions and government targets.

Near the Afghan border, a different problem was developing for the Iranian government. Having sealed off the Pakistani border with Afghanistan, Soviet and Afghan forces were now concentrating on eliminating the Afghan insurgents' links with Iran, their last remaining outlet to the outside world. Knowing that the Iranian government's military resources in the northeast were vastly inferior to their own, Soviet forces routinely pursued Afghan rebel groups over the Iranian border, sometimes operating inside Iran for days at a time. Iranian protests over this behavior went unheeded in Moscow, and unheard in much of the rest of the world.

Under cover of the operations against the Afghans in northeastern Iran, the Soviet Union was recruiting and training groups of disaffected Iranians into effective irregular units. Initially, these units fought against the Afghan Mujaheddin; ultimately, they were intended for action against the government in Tehran.

Although no cease-fire was announced officially, hostilities on the Iran-Iraq border had generally ceased by the fall of 1991. Iraqi air strikes also came to an end and the blockade of the Iranian coast was lifted. Since hostilities had not been concluded officially, however, the bulk of the Iranian army was kept along the Iraqi border, and only small units were shifted north to deal with the growing insurgency in the northwest.

As they grew in strength, Iranian leftists began to forge links with similar movements elsewhere in the Middle East. Relations were particularly close with elements of the Syrian army and Ba'ath party. While Syria was officially an ally of the Islamic Republic, it had long had difficulty with Shi'ite extremist groups in Lebanon, and even within Syria itself, and accordingly was pleased with the prospect of a more secular-minded regime in Tehran. Further, the Syrian government privately welcomed the prospect of an openly pro-Soviet regime in Iran, since this would go far to shift the balance of power in the Arab world away from the conservative states as well as lessening the relative importance of Iraq--still Syria's principal rival--within the group of Mid-Eastern allies of the Soviet Union.

By the autumn of 1992, Iranian leftists were secretly stockpiling weapons in and around Tehran, their principal area of strength. At the same time, their activities in the northeastern border region, where the training and equipping of irregular units was continuing, had attracted the attention of the Iranian government. A series of clashes

between Iranian Army and Revolutionary Guards units and Soviet-trained rebels ensued. The remoteness of the region and its near-total lack of logistical facilities, together with the rebels' access to sanctuary in Afghanistan, made it nearly impossible for the Tehran government to interfere to any large extent in their activities. After a few futile attempts at organized military sweeps through the region by regular army forces, operations were left primarily to locally-based Revolutionary Guards forces. The situation in the northeast settled into a pattern of small-scale clashes between these government supporters and rebel bands operating from over the Afghan border.

The situation in the more heavily populated and much less remote northwestern region of Iran was of greater immediate concern to the Tehran government. Well-supplied with covert Soviet and Iraqi aid, separatist forces in this region controlled increasing amounts of territory, and exerted widespread influence in those areas, such as the few urban centers, which they were unable to control militarily. Freed from the burden of the war with Iraq, the Iranian Army began planning a major offensive in the northwest for the spring of 1993.

### **Civil War and Great Power Intervention in Iran, 1993**

The Army's offensive in the northwest got underway in late April 1993, as soon as weather permitted operations in the region's mountains. Little difficulty was encountered in occupying cities and towns, but as Iranian forces began advancing into mountainous areas to the north, progress slowed considerably. Adding to the Army's difficulties was the fact that the rebels received intermittent but effective support from Iraqi aircraft and, occasionally, artillery. As things turned out, the true measure of the rebels' military effectiveness was never tested; for less than a month after the beginning of the Army's offensive, it was interrupted by an event which suddenly shifted the situation in Iran from one of isolated insurgencies to one of widespread civil war.

On May 5, 1993, leftist forces staged a coup in Tehran. The rebels were initially successful in gaining control of the city. After several days of bloody street fighting between them and the Revolutionary Guards, the People's Democratic Republic of Iran (PDRI) was proclaimed, and recognized immediately by the Soviet Union and its allies, including both Iraq and Syria. Recognition by Libya and South Yemen followed a few days later; no other Arab country recognized the new regime. Inside Iran, Kurdish and Azeri leaders, in separate statements, offered conditional recognition to the new government, demanding full autonomy for their respective regions. The northeast, where Soviet activity had been going on for years, was a region of strength for the new regime.

which quickly gained control of Mashhad, the region's only major city. The remote southeastern region, inhabited principally by Baluchi nomads, lapsed into de facto autonomy as representatives of the Islamic regime were overthrown by local forces without being replaced by those of the fledgling PDRI.

The new regime had much less support in the central and southwestern regions of Iran. The cities of Isfahan and Qom remained loyal to the Islamic Republic, many government officials finding refuge in the latter, as did the Fars and Larstan provinces along the Persian Gulf coast. The oil-producing region of Khuzistan in the southwest was a special case. Local leaders initially proclaimed their adherence to the Islamic Republic. As the situation in other parts of Iran disintegrated, however, they began moving towards extensive local autonomy.

The Iranian Army, for its part, was almost universally hostile to the revolutionary regime. Even before the PDRI was proclaimed, military units were breaking off action in the northwest and marching on Tehran. By May 30th, the capital was retaken and supporters of the PDRI had fled to the north and east into the Elburz Mountains. At the same time, the self-styled Central Committee of the PDRI sent out urgent calls for assistance to all of those countries which had recognized the new regime. These were clearly intended for the U.S.S.R. and, once again, the Soviets lost no time in coming to the aid of their ally. Indeed, the speed and efficiency of the Soviet military operations which followed, convinced many observers that they had been planned long in advance.

On the 2nd of June, Soviet paratroopers landed north and east of Tehran to cover the retreat of pro-Soviet forces, while seaborne units secured control of the major ports on the Iranian Caspian Sea coast. These were quickly turned into forward bases for Soviet ground and air forces preparing to advance on Tehran. At the same time, Soviet units from Afghanistan and the Soviet Turkmen Republic moved into eastern Iran to ensure the PDRI's control of Mashhad and to secure the rest of the border region. In the northwest, the Soviet intervention sparked a general uprising by the Kurdish and Azeri populations against the Islamic government and the Iranian Army. Since most army units had been withdrawn to deal with the coup in Tehran, the Kurdish and Azeri rebels had little difficulty in securing total control of their respective regions. Once again, Iraqi air power went into action to aid in dislodging the Iranian Army from fortified positions.

This limited use of air power was the only direct participation by Iraq in the events leading to the collapse of the Iranian government. Iraqi ground forces did not engage Iranian army units, nor did Soviet forces transit through Iraq. Iraq did supply considerable

covert assistance to the Kurds of Iran. This consisted primarily of financial support and military advisors, the latter drawn principally from Iraq's large Kurdish community. As a quid-pro-quo, the Iranian Kurds consistently avoided any attempt to export their revolution to the Kurdish populations of northern Iraq.

On the 10th of June, Tehran was retaken by Soviet troops and Iranian leftists, and the Popular Democratic Republic of Iran was reinstated. Once again, the forces loyal to the Islamic Republic fled to the south. This time, however, Soviet troops pursued them for some distance, occupying territory as far south as Qom.

Following what seemed to be the final collapse of the Islamic government, Iraqi forces in the south moved to reoccupy the territory which had originally been in dispute between Iraq and Iran. The area up to the prewar frontier was retaken without difficulty. When Iraqi forces attempted to advance inside Iran, however, they encountered unexpectedly severe resistance from local forces and remaining units of the Iranian Army. While still maintaining their theoretical allegiance to the Islamic government, local leaders, realizing that no effective aid would be forthcoming from that direction, appealed independently for aid to the Arab states, Egypt and Saudi Arabia in particular, against the Soviet/Iraqi threat.

These states were extremely alarmed by the latest developments in Iran, and the Saudis were appalled at the prospect of Soviet control over the entire northern coast of the Persian Gulf. There seemed little that they could do in terms of direct military resistance, however, in the face of the extensive Soviet effort underway. Accordingly, on the 15th of June, the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council, meeting in an emergency session in Riyadh, resolved to call on the United States, as the only power with the capability--at least in theory--to intervene against this unprecedented extension of Soviet influence.

Long before this call, intensive debate was underway in Washington as to the appropriate American response. The Soviet intervention had been vehemently denounced; the United States, along with many of its allies, made formal protests to the Soviet government. There was considerable sentiment both in and out of the administration that the U.S. could not allow Soviet control to be extended over all or even part of Iran without making some sort of response. Following the lack of U.S. action in response to the Soviet incursions against Pakistan, it was argued, passivity in this case would send an undeniable signal not only to the Soviets, but to all present and potential American allies, that the U.S. was unwilling or unable to intervene to halt any move that Soviet forces might make to

expand the area of their influence and control. What might constitute an appropriate response in this case, however, was very much open to question.

In an initial move, the U.S. Government, in mid-May, had ordered a carrier task force, which had been operating in the Indian Ocean, to proceed to the Arabian Sea, where it soon would be joined by a second carrier which was en route from the western Pacific. Steps were also initiated to shift a third carrier to the region and to reinforce the Marine presence there. These moves would take four weeks to complete, however. When the PDRI was established in Tehran on June 10th, a brigade of the 82nd airborne division, part of the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force, was ordered to move to its pre-positioning location in Oman.

The United States sought the support of its allies, particularly the members of NATO, for further action, but found little support for military action in European capitals. A joint statement by the members of the European Communities, while condemning the Soviet actions, made it clear to the United States that the member nations would take no part in any military intervention in the region. The Labour government in Great Britain was especially categorical in its stand against any Western intervention in Iran. Similar messages came from Tokyo.

In general, it seems that the governments of Europe and Japan were motivated by two distinct factors in their opposition to active intervention in Southwest Asia. The first was a great reluctance to risk antagonizing the Soviet Union, thus jeopardizing what was perceived to be a stable and favorable political climate in Europe and East Asia. The second was the fear that U.S. intervention in Iran would plunge the entire Gulf region into a major war which would disrupt oil production throughout the area, wreaking havoc on the European and Japanese economies which, unlike that of the United States, continued to depend on the Gulf for almost all their oil supplies.

A partial exception to this response was Turkey. The Turkish government was not only alarmed by the Soviet activities taking place in a neighboring country, but extremely apprehensive about the possible resurgence of Kurdish separatism within Turkey itself, following the successful actions of Iranian Kurds. Accordingly, Turkish leaders privately urged the United States to find some way to intervene in the region and even hinted that Turkish facilities might be made available to support such an action. Turkey also began a partial mobilization and reinforced military positions on its borders with Iran and the Soviet Union.



The position of the Israeli government reflected its special position in the region. While Tehran's anti-Israeli rhetoric had long been among the harshest in the Middle East, Israel had in fact maintained a useful covert relationship with the Islamic Republic throughout the Iran/Iraq war and was alarmed at the disintegration of authority in Iran which could potentially leave Iraq free to cooperate more closely with Israel's Arab enemies. While any overt Israeli role in Iran was clearly out of the question, Jerusalem's extensive intelligence assets throughout Iran, which included high-level connections in the Iranian army, were made available to the United States throughout the crisis.

Despite considerable pressure from certain domestic political circles, the President of the United States remained reluctant to intervene directly in Iran. This was due in part to the basic political philosophy of his administration. Beyond this, however, not only the president, but many military leaders, were troubled at the seeming lack of viable local allies in Iran. Unlike the Soviet Union, which was ostensibly intervening in support of an embattled government, the United States would have no such pretext, since the Islamic Republic, which Washington still considered to be the "legitimate" government of Iran, had requested no such assistance. U.S. forces, thus, would in all likelihood be operating in hostile territory even before coming into contact with the Soviets. Accordingly, it would not be feasible for the United States to deploy merely a token or symbolic force whose sole purpose would be to deter further Soviet aggression. Any move into the Gulf region would necessarily constitute a major military operation.

The continuing reservations of a number of U.S. leaders notwithstanding, the Gulf Cooperation Council's call for U.S. assistance on the 15th convinced the president that action was necessary, and thus tipped the balance of the U.S. internal debate. In a message to Congress on June 17th, the president announced that in response to a request from America's allies in the region, U.S. forces would intervene in Iran to aid the inhabitants of that country in their struggle to resist Soviet domination. Although no limits were placed on this intervention in the president's speech, military and administration leaders made it clear that the United States would not attempt to contest control of those areas which Soviet forces already occupied. Rather, U.S. troops would be sent to Khuzistan, and to certain points along the Gulf coast in order to prevent the U.S.S.R. from extending its influence into these areas. The ultimate U.S. goal was proclaimed to be the establishment of a stable representative government and the negotiated withdrawal of all foreign forces from Iran.

U.S. forces began moving into Iran on the 20th of June. Two brigades of the 82nd Airborne division took up positions in Khuzistan without encountering local resistance. At the same time, a tactical air wing, which had previously been deployed to Oman, was

moved to bases in northeastern Saudi Arabia. On the 21st, a Marine Amphibious brigade occupied the Iranian naval base of Bandar Abbas, on the Strait of Hormuz. Additional air units were deployed to Saudi Arabia and Oman over the course of the following weeks.

The political situation which U.S. forces found upon their arrival was, at best, unsettled. The areas to which they deployed were, in theory, under the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic, but no organized representatives of that regime remained in Khuzistan. While there were few local forces supportive of the PDRI, there was initially considerable competition between forces loyal to the Islamic Republic and those desiring local autonomy. Autonomist sentiment was initially concentrated in urban areas, while the Islamic Republic retained considerable support in the countryside. The United States remained officially neutral on this question, forces in the field dealing with any local authorities willing to cooperate, regardless of their stated political allegiance.

Progressively, pro-autonomy forces gained the upper hand, aided initially by "unofficial" financial and organizational support provided by Saudi Arabia. By October, 1993, a "Provisional Council" was in place, consisting of the principal local leaders and a small number of officers of the former Iranian Army. This body derived the major part of its influence from the fact that it became the official recipient of Saudi financial assistance, but it never became more than a loose grouping of autonomous leaders, each with his individual power base.

Although the region's military potential, which consisted of scattered units of the Iranian Army and much larger numbers of locally-based irregular forces, had been sufficient to thwart a tentative Iraqi push into Khuzistan in June, it lacked any measure of central organization. After the arrival of U.S. forces, a portion of the remaining regular Army forces, having little desire for open cooperation with the United States, left the area of U.S. occupation to rejoin the remaining Iranian forces in the central part of the country; others gradually disbanded. Only a few individual officers remained to play a role in local affairs.

The U.S. deployments were not challenged by Soviet forces, although Moscow protested the American "invasion" of Iran. Soviet leaders obviously wished to avoid a direct confrontation with the United States, and appeared to be willing to accept a U.S. military presence in southern Iran in the process. It is likely that Soviet leaders concluded that the consensus backing the U.S. move, both on the domestic and the international level, was so fragile that it would likely fall apart in time, leading to a U.S. withdrawal.

Immediate confrontation, moreover, might serve to strengthen U.S. resolve. Accordingly, the Soviet Union prepared to take the long view and wait out the U.S. intervention.

By the late summer of 1993, a tenuous equilibrium seemed to have been established in Iran. The Soviets and their various local allies controlled roughly two-thirds of the country. The PDRI was firmly established in Tehran and effectively controlled the surrounding region, which was the scene of the largest concentration of Soviet troops. Autonomous Kurdish and Azeri republics controlled the northwest. Soviet troops were also present in these areas, but were fewer in number and much less visible. The largely empty expanses of eastern Iran were dominated by Soviet air power, although some Soviet ground forces also were present there.

The Islamic government, along with the remains of the Iranian Army, controlled the area around Isfahan, in central Iran, and, at least in theory, the whole of the mountainous region between there and the Gulf, in which neither U.S. nor Soviet troops were deployed. Throughout the central area Revolutionary Guard units loyal to the Islamic Republic clashed with locally-based opposition forces, of various ideological allegiances, for control of particular towns and districts, resulting in a general state of near-anarchy. Irregular units of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards were also active in attacking both Soviet and PDRI forces throughout the northeastern and north central parts of the country.

Although the armed forces of the Islamic government were distinctly inferior to those of the Soviets to the north--in particular lacking any effective air power--the U.S.S.R. did not make a serious attempt to eliminate the remnants of the Islamic Republic after the initial attack dislodged it from Tehran. Soviet leaders seemed to prefer to maintain the semblance of an Islamic republic as a buffer between its forces and the U.S. units in the south.

U.S. forces were concentrated in two distinct areas. By the late summer of 1993, six brigades of U.S. Army troops were present in Khuzistan, including units from the 82nd Airborne, the 101st Air-mobile, and the 24th Mechanized Infantry Divisions. These forces were supported by three tactical fighter wings, the 1st, 27th, and 347th, which were based primarily in Saudi Arabia, although a few squadrons operated from airfields in Iran. Some 300 miles to the southeast, two Marine brigades and a Marine tactical air wing held the area surrounding the key position of Bandar Abbas on the Strait of Hormuz, as well as the Iranian island of Qishm in the middle of the Strait. An additional Air Force tactical wing was based in northern Oman. Three Navy carrier task forces in the Arabian Sea completed the U.S. deployment.

Deployment of forces on such a scale required extensive logistical support facilities. Due to the reluctance of the Saudi government to host any more U.S. forces than absolutely necessary, as well as the danger involved in sending shipping into the Persian Gulf, the principal U.S. logistical, and communications centers were located in Egypt. Additional U.S. Air Force tactical fighter, electronic warfare, and reconnaissance squadrons were also based in Egypt, while a Navy carrier task force was kept permanently in the Eastern Mediterranean.

### **Increasing Regional Tension, 1994**

While U.S. forces had encountered little resistance in their initial deployment to Iran, their occupation became progressively less peaceful in late 1993 and early 1994. Soviet forces and the "official" army of the PDRI still avoided clashes with U.S. forces. However, neither the Kurdish forces, whose territory bordered that held by the U.S. Army in the north, the Baluchis, who controlled the area north and east of the Marine positions on the Strait of Hormuz, nor local leftist factions, which were active throughout the central region areas, were under any such restraint. Terrorist-style attacks on U.S. forces grew in frequency and severity, producing a small but steady stream of U.S. casualties.

American losses received a great deal of attention in the United States, but generated mixed reactions. Political forces which had been opposed to the intervention in the first place pointed to them as a sign that the U.S. presence, far from being welcomed by the local inhabitants, was being actively opposed by them. In such conditions, it was argued, the U.S. position was untenable and should be abandoned to prevent more "useless" loss of American lives. Another body of opinion, however, which was particularly strong in Congress and the press, pushed for effective reprisals in return for attacks on U.S. forces, holding that the U.S. should seek actively to expand its area of influence in Iran. While not acceding to the second, more extreme, aspect of this latter point of view, the administration found it necessary by the winter of 1994 to order U.S. forces in Iran to adopt a more aggressive policy. In February of that year, U.S. aircraft began carrying out strikes against the suspected sources of attacks on American forces. Initially, the U.S. attacks were concentrated in the Kurdish regions north of Khuzistan, but they were gradually expanded to include targets in other areas of southern Iran, particularly Baluchistan in the far eastern part of the country.

These attacks led to the first direct U.S./Soviet clash of the operation. The Soviet government had protested the more aggressive U.S. policy from the outset, warning that it would lead to confrontation which the Soviets claimed they did not desire. On the 16th of

February, a U.S. F-16 was downed by surface-to-air missiles over territory controlled by Kurdish forces. A more serious incident took place a week later, on the 22nd, when U.S. aircraft on a reconnaissance mission over eastern Iran were intercepted by Soviet aircraft from Afghanistan. In the resulting aerial battle, one U.S. and two Soviet aircraft were downed.

News of this first direct engagement served to weaken the forces in the United States calling for disengagement from Iran. After the incident, the American public increasingly understood the situation as a U.S./Soviet confrontation, rather than an intervention into an obscure third world quarrel in support of a particularly unappealing government.

Accordingly, U.S. actions in Iran became progressively more aggressive throughout the spring of 1994. More U.S./Soviet air clashes ensued, both sides suffering additional casualties. U.S. forces also moved to secure direct control over the entire coastline of the Persian Gulf. Marine and Army units were further reinforced, so that three full divisions of Army troops and one of Marines were now present in Iran, and prepared to occupy key positions in the wide region between their original deployment areas. Unlike the original U.S. deployments, however, these moves encountered significant local resistance from pro-Soviet forces and from fighters loyal to the Islamic Republic.

Tensions were also rising elsewhere in the region. They first erupted into violence in April, 1994, in the Dhofar province of southern Oman, an area with a history of Soviet-supported rebellions against domination by the government in Muscat. The Omani rebels were supported by the pro-Soviet government of South Yemen, which provided them sanctuary and a source of Soviet-supplied equipment, and the Sultan of Oman requested U.S. assistance in quelling this uprising. As Omani facilities were critical to U.S. operations in Iran, the request could not very well be refused. Special forces units and an Army brigade, which had been held in reserve in Oman, were committed to combat in Dhofar in April 1994. Rather than divert air units needed for operations in Iran, one of the carrier task forces operating in the Arabian Sea was ordered to provide air support for U.S. operations.

A much more serious development took place in western Pakistan. The Baluchi population of that region was closely linked to the inhabitants of southeastern Iran. As the latter gained increasing independence following the disintegration of Iran, the idea of an independent Baluchistan gained support on both sides of the border. Separatist sentiment had long existed among Pakistan's Baluchi population in any case, occasionally flaring into

open violence. Despite this, it seems unlikely that the Pakistani Baluchis would have risen in open revolt had it not been for two factors. The first of these was the diminished effectiveness of the Pakistani Army following its clashes with the Soviets on the Afghan border in 1989. From that time on, the government and the Army were forced to devote nearly all of their resources to maintaining order in the major urban areas of the country, in addition to patrolling the northwest frontier. The remote regions of Baluchistan, as a result, were held only by token garrisons in a few of the larger towns. The second key factor was the covert intervention of the Soviet Union and its Afghan and Iranian allies. These agents provided existing Baluchi separatist movements with arms supplies, money, and advice, and hinted that Soviet forces would intervene to support a Baluchi uprising.

Beginning in May, Baluchi insurgents overran Pakistani Army positions in the Chagai Hills, on the border with Afghanistan, and in the arid country to their south. On May 20th, the United Republic of Baluchistan was proclaimed in the town of Khash, on the Iranian side of the border. The proclamation stated explicitly that the new state would include territory which had formerly belonged to both Iran and to Pakistan. The new state was recognized immediately by the PDRI and by Afghanistan, although, officially at least, not by the Soviet Union. It was clear, however, that substantial Soviet assistance was reaching the separatists via Afghanistan.

The remarkable evolution of U.S. policy from 1989 to 1994 was strikingly demonstrated by the fact that, in this instance, the United States anticipated a request for assistance by the Pakistani government, offering such aid before it was sought officially. The U.S. response reflected not only a desire to prevent the dismemberment of Pakistan, but also the realization that the security of U.S. forces on the Iranian side of the Strait of Hormuz could be endangered seriously by the consolidation of a pro-Soviet regime in Baluchistan.

Aircraft from a U.S. carrier in the Indian Ocean began providing air support for Pakistani troops by May 24 and U.S. advisors and special forces were in the country soon thereafter. Given the level of U.S. involvement elsewhere in Southwest Asia, however, intervention in the new Pakistani crisis necessitated bringing in additional U.S. forces from outside the region. A fourth aircraft carrier arrived on the scene on June 1. In the course of the first two weeks of June, elements of the 7th Light Infantry Division arrived in Pakistan and were moved quickly into position alongside Pakistani troops in the Kirthar Mountains, which divided Baluchistan from the rest of Pakistan. Two Air Force wings, the 49th and 366th, were deployed to Pakistani bases at the same time. Marine units from

the continental U.S. secured positions on the Baluchi coastline the following week. Elements of a second Marine Air Wing followed in early July.

Although the initial insertion of these troops was largely unopposed, they found it more difficult to carry out effective operations in the interior of the country; U.S. casualties mounted. Further, in an alarming development, aircraft of the Afghan Air Force attempted several strikes to provide air support for the insurgents, which led to clashes with U.S. and Pakistani air units. U.S. and Pakistani leaders then took a critical decision: On July 15th and following days, Pakistani forces began to carry out air strikes against bases in southern Afghanistan; U.S. forces flew cover for these operations. The raids were initially quite successful, resulting in no U.S. or Pakistani casualties, but they led to a significant escalation in the level of hostilities. Units of the Afghan Army crossed over the border into Pakistan, threatening the Bolan Pass north of the key town of Queta, which controlled access from Afghanistan to the southern Punjab. In an even more direct challenge to U.S. forces, elite Soviet airborne troops from Afghanistan moved to occupy key points in both the Iranian and Pakistani portions of Baluchistan.

#### **International Developments, 1994-95**

International reaction to this escalation of the conflict in Southwest Asia was sharp, but mixed. Upon realizing the extent of the Soviet threat in the region, a number of countries, including Japan, France and the Federal Republic of Germany moved closer to the United States. One concrete benefit to come out of this was the French offer to allow U.S. ships to make use of French repair and resupply facilities in the small East African nation of Djibouti. This position was useful to the United States in the continuing skirmishes with "South Yemeni" forces in Oman. Perhaps more importantly, the U.S. began private discussions with FRG officials about the potential transfer of U.S. forces in Europe to the Gulf region.

Other U.S. allies, however, saw in the latest events the fulfillment of their predictions that U.S. involvement would lead only to escalation and risk a general upheaval. Chief among these was Great Britain, joined by a number of the smaller members of NATO, such as the Netherlands. Interestingly, the key regional powers, India and China, which had earlier been extremely critical of U.S. actions, moved towards a more neutral policy. India, in particular, alarmed at the destabilization of its western border, called on both great powers to restrain their allies and remove their own forces from the region.

The most important reactions, at least in the short term, were those of the key nations of the Middle East, a number of which were experiencing significant changes in internal conditions which affected their external position.

As events in the Gulf progressed, Iraq took a less and less active part in them. Having achieved its first priority, the elimination of the Iranian threat, the government in Baghdad concentrated on improving its domestic situation. It maintained close relations with the Soviet Union and the Iranian leftists, but apart from limited financial support of the Iranian Kurds, it took no active role in Iran. Although a substantial cadre of Soviet military advisors remained in Iraq, Western intelligence sources believed that no significant number of active military personnel remained in the country after 1993. Soviet long-range aircraft made occasional use of Iraqi bases, but Iraq was not used by the Soviets as a staging area for missions in Iran.

An important diplomatic accomplishment for Iraq was the gradual improvement of relations with Syria and the resulting access to Syrian pipelines which allowed Iraq to resume oil exports. Since the chaotic situation in the Gulf kept the world price of oil high, these provided considerable income for the rebuilding of Iraq's economy. In return, the fees paid by Iraq to Syria for the use of the pipelines made up, at least partially, for the curtailment of Saudi financial assistance to Damascus which followed Riyadh's decision to oppose pro-Soviet forces in Iran and the Gulf more openly. Iraq's own attempts to repair its relations with Saudi Arabia met with little success.

The Syrian government, for its part, saw a number of ways in which the situation could be turned to advantage. Capitalizing on Saudia Arabia's preoccupation with Gulf issues, Syria moved to consolidate its position with its closest neighbors. Relations with Jordan, for one, improved considerably. This was due in part to the displeasure on the part of the Jordanian government with the continuing U.S. operations in the Gulf, which were seen in Amman as likely to lead to the general destabilization of the Islamic world. More importantly, the attitude of King Hussein and his advisors reflected their conclusion that a negotiated settlement with Israel, in the end, was unachievable. Right wing forces, which had come increasingly to dominate Israeli politics in the early 1990s, gave only lip service to the goal of a negotiated peace, while moving actively to consolidate Israeli control over all the occupied territories.

A further source of strength for Damascus was its near-total control of the Palestinian movement, which gave the Syrian government considerable leverage in Amman. A final point of strength for Syria was its hegemony over the greater portion of



Lebanon. With the exception of faction-ridden Beirut, where a Lebanese national government existed only in name, and the far south, which was under de facto Israeli control, Syrian forces had managed to impose a measure of order on the various Lebanese communities.

Israel, as noted above, had gone through a particularly intransigent period in the early 1990s. Not only was any dialogue with most of the surrounding Arab states broken off, but internal repression directed against the Arab population of the West Bank reached new levels. This led to severe internal repercussions, however. For the first time in its history, Israel was faced with a significant anti-draft movement among young Jews who refused to serve in an Army whose purpose they saw not as the defense of the nation, but rather the repression of minority elements within it. The government's position deteriorated further when a raid into southern Lebanon, in June 1994, led to an Israeli column falling into a Syrian ambush from which it was extricated only after a massive intervention by Israeli aircraft and considerable loss of life.

These pressures led to a change of government in November 1994. By this time, however, Israel's foreign policy options were severely limited. Syria and Jordan were closely united and unambiguously hostile, while the Palestinian movement both inside the West Bank and abroad was radicalized irrevocably. The new government did make some progress in improving relations with Saudi Arabia, which now saw Syria and the other Soviet allies in the Middle East as a much greater threat to its security than that posed by Israel. Concerted attempts were also made to regain normal relations with Egypt, a country with which Israel was still technically at peace. The tentative responses made by the Cairo government to Israeli overtures brought such a storm of protest from leftist groups in the Egyptian military that they were dropped immediately, however.

The new government in Jerusalem was also less supportive of U.S. actions in the Gulf than its predecessor had been. Israeli leaders had privately welcomed the initial U.S. intervention in Iran, but in late 1994 the new government concluded that the U.S. involvement in Iran was unlikely to lead to the creation of a strong pro-Western regime in Tehran. At the same time, the ongoing conflict in the Gulf seemed to be encouraging the rapprochement between Syria and Iraq and strengthening the position of radical leftists in Egypt.

The position of the Egyptian government, in fact, was precarious. The U.S. military presence in that country, which had never been particularly popular, became a source of bitter contention between the government and popular fundamentalist factions, on

the one hand, and military leftists, on the other. U.S. analysts warned that the fall of the pro-Western government in Cairo was a distinct possibility if present trends persisted. U.S. operations in Egypt were kept as inconspicuous as possible, but the country's key geographical position as the link between the Mediterranean and the Middle East precluded any possibility of removing the U.S. presence entirely.

While events in the Middle East absorbed American official and public attention, conditions in other areas of the world also reflected the greater level of international tension. In Western Europe, the major NATO governments moved noticeably closer to the United States, the most dramatic event being the fall of the Labour government in London, and its replacement by a pro-NATO Conservative/Social Democratic coalition. Less spectacular, but also important, was the gradual deemphasis of "special" economic and social relations with Eastern Europe on the part of the West German government in favor of a more united Western approach. Soviet behavior also became less accommodating as Western response to Moscow's political and economic overtures declined. For the first time since the late 1980s, Western analysts detected an increase in the number and quality of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe.

Events in Asia were less encouraging for the United States. While Japan remained a close ally, the social and political situation in South Korea continued to deteriorate. Moderate forces in Seoul fared poorly in the atmosphere of increasing violence, leaving little hope of a democratic solution to Korea's problems. Instead, an effective, if authoritarian, military government was opposed by radical leftist forces, who made routine use of deadly terrorist tactics.

### **Regional Wars Lead to Worldwide Conflict**

In the fall of 1994, there seemed little hope for a quick resolution of any of conflicts in which U.S. forces found themselves in Southwest Asia. Still, the increasingly violent trend of events in the region notwithstanding, it is possible that political solutions would eventually have been found had not events in other regions of the world suddenly intruded.

The United States and the world were taken completely by surprise when, on November 1, 1994, North Korean forces launched a massive attack along the entire length of the intra-Korean border. While U.S. officials had long been concerned about the deteriorating internal situation in South Korea and suspected that North Korean agents had been partially responsible, an open attack had not been thought likely in either Washington or Seoul. North Korea offered no official explanation for this attack, which seems to have

begun without the explicit approval, or even the definite knowledge, of the Soviet Union. It appears that North Korean leaders, noting the continuing discord inside South Korea and, in particular, the government's increasing use of the armed forces against opponents of the regime, and counting on U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf to prevent it from intervening decisively in Korea, decided to strike before the Seoul regime had an opportunity to put its affairs in order. From the scale of the attack, it is clear that North Korean leaders intended to seize key positions in the South quickly, overwhelming South Korean and remaining U.S. forces before they had a chance to regroup and receive reinforcements.

As it was, the attack was very nearly successful. The single U.S. brigade which remained in Korea was cut off in the first day of fighting, suffering many casualties in the process. South Korean units fared equally poorly, and it became clear by November 5th that Seoul would fall in a matter of days if the local balance of power remained unchanged.

U.S. reaction to this stunning development was largely conditioned by the ongoing conflict in the Persian Gulf. In more normal times it is not inconceivable that the U.S. administration, given the poor state of its relations with South Korea, would have sought merely to extricate American troops, even if this meant abandoning the Seoul regime. Once again, however, the new world view of the American president, which had been demonstrated at the outbreak of the crisis in Baluchistan, dominated U.S. reactions.

While political resolve was not lacking in Washington, U.S. military means in the Pacific had become greatly strained. A single aircraft carrier was present in the Western Pacific--and was in fact en route to Japan for refitting and resupply following a tour in the Indian Ocean. Both the Marine Division on Okinawa and the Army troops in Japan were far from full strength due to the detachment of units to the Gulf. U.S. ground forces in Korea, as noted, consisted of one brigade. Two Air force tactical wings, one in Korea and one in Japan, completed the list of U.S. military assets in the region. In the opinion of military commanders in the field, these forces were insufficient to relieve the U.S. forces trapped near the DMZ by the North Korean advance, let alone to redress the general force balance in Korea. Further, forces in the continental United States normally designated for use in Korea were in large part committed to the Persian Gulf conflict. Rapid reinforcement, thus, would be difficult.

Faced with this situation, the president made a fateful decision. On November 7, aircraft from the U.S.S. *Nimitz*, which by then had reached the Sea of Japan, attacked North Korean forces massing for a push against Seoul in the strategic Uijongbu Corridor

with four low-yield nuclear weapons. The immediate, and widely publicized, purpose of these attacks was to allow the U.S. forces trapped north of Seoul to move to more tenable positions. It was hoped that it would also break the momentum of the North Korean offensive, giving U.S. and South Korean forces time to regroup and receive reinforcements. Finally, this dramatic act was meant to demonstrate U.S. resolve to defend South Korea and serve as a clear warning to North Korea and its Soviet allies that the United States would not hesitate to use all necessary force to bring the situation under control. Within hours of the U.S. attacks, the United States issued a call for a cease-fire in Korea to be followed by negotiations for a more permanent solution to the conflict.

The impact of the U.S. nuclear strikes action on the short-run military situation was significant, but perhaps not as momentous as some might have expected. Casualties among the North Korean units that were struck were high, and the offensive in which they were to participate was disorganized and delayed, permitting U.S. troops to withdraw from their exposed position to a more secure location. The war was by no means ended, however. U.S. calls for negotiations were flatly ignored in Pyongyang and North Korean forces showed every sign of preparing to continue their offensive as soon as they had managed to regroup.

The importance of the U.S. action, however, reached far beyond Korea. The reaction of other nations, and in particular of the Soviet Union, was monitored with considerable anxiety in Washington. The Soviet Union took no action which indicated that it was contemplating immediate retaliation. On the public and diplomatic level, however, Soviet reaction was scathing. Beyond the anticipated automatic condemnation of this latest U.S. "atrociousness," Soviet leaders asserted, in various statements, that the U.S.S.R. would be forced to "punish" any further use of nuclear weapons against its allies. The impact of these statements was diminished, however, by the fact that Soviet representatives refused to clarify them in private meetings with Western leaders, leaving unanswered the critical question of whether the Soviet Union would consider using nuclear weapons of its own in Korea or elsewhere. Initially, at least, it seemed that Moscow was content to let the Americans suffer international censure and did not wish to draw attention to itself. On a less visible level, however, U.S. intelligence sources reported that extensive Soviet material and technical support was being made available to North Korea, and that Soviet officers were once again commanding North Korean air units.

The People's Republic of China followed the Soviet lead. Harsh condemnation of U.S. actions and a pledge of fraternal assistance to the regime in Pyongyang were issued rapidly by Beijing. U.S. analysts concluded that neither the Soviets nor the Chinese had

been consulted before the North Korean attack, and that both of these countries were unwilling to take significant risks to insure North Korea's victory, although both would probably move to prevent the collapse of the Pyonyang regime if this seemed imminent.

Among America's allies, official reactions seemed to be cautiously supportive of the U.S. action. While all governments felt compelled to regret publicly that nuclear weapons had been used at all, the American explanation that the limited use of nuclear weapons had been authorized as a last resort to prevent the annihilation of U.S. forces was generally accepted. On the popular level, anti-American reaction was much more visible. Large demonstrations protesting the U.S. action were held in Japan and Western Europe.

Popular reaction in the U.S., after an initial period of shock, also was negative, but not overwhelmingly so. The horror felt by the majority of the population over the use of nuclear weapons was offset by the recognition that the administration's action had saved the lives of Americans fighting in Korea. This somewhat ambiguous reaction led to an intense private debate within the administration as to the advisability of the further use of nuclear weapons in Korea. Supporters of this policy argued that, barring such an action, large numbers of U.S. troops would have to be sent to Korea for an indefinite period, exposing the United States to the risk of a prolonged and costly war. Prompt nuclear strikes against key targets inside North Korea, these officials asserted, would lead to the collapse of the Pyonyang regime and the end of the war, while the weak Soviet reaction to the first U.S. strike demonstrated that the Soviet Union was not about to risk a nuclear conflict with the United States over as unpredictable an ally as North Korea. The domestic and international consequences of such an action, they believed, would not be catastrophic since the United States had already taken the critical step of initiating a nuclear attack without having triggered any unmanageable consequences.

Opponents of further nuclear use, who included the president, countered that while irreparable damage to the domestic and international positions of both the United States and the administration had probably not been inflicted by the one-time use of nuclear weapons, this was due primarily to the demonstrably defensive and limited nature of the U.S. strikes. Further, the fact that the U.S. move came as a surprise to its opponents, including the Soviet Union, hindered them in finding a timely and effective military response; the advantage of surprise would not be repeated. For both reasons, the president concluded that it would be unwise to employ nuclear weapons again in Korea. The inevitable result of this decision was that ground and air forces would once again have to be sent to Korea in large numbers.

By mid-December, two full U.S. divisions, the 2nd and 25th Infantry, and elements of the 4th Mechanized division, were in Korea, along with four tactical air wings. While these deployments were underway, the U.S. carried out an intensive air campaign against North Korea, using Guam-based B-52s and B-1s, as well as tactical aircraft. A major call-up of reserves was also initiated. The Seventh Fleet was ordered on full war footing; three carrier task forces and two battleships were transferred from the Atlantic.

By late December, U.S. and South Korean forces had consolidated their positions around Seoul, and the capital was no longer considered threatened. North Korean forces continued to advance somewhat in other parts of the country, however, especially along the eastern coast. Meanwhile, the North Koreans retaliated for the U.S. bombings by launching intense air attacks on the U.S. task forces off their coast. These attacks, carried out both by aircraft, missile-armed patrol boats, and land-based missiles, resulted in the first major U.S. naval losses in many decades. A destroyer and two frigates were sunk in separate incidents.

Two months later, the focus of international attention was shifted abruptly back to the Middle East. On the 7th of March, 1995, Syrian and Jordanian forces attacked Israel from the north and east. The Syrian government had apparently concluded that, with the United States already overextended, the opportunity existed for an initial military success against Israel, which might then lead to the total defeat of the Jewish state and its elimination as a significant military power, if not its total collapse. Events were to show that while Syria's long term political analysis was flawed, its confidence in the likely initial success of its armed forces was well-founded.

While the Israeli government and armed forces were not entirely unprepared for this sudden attack, the Syrians managed to achieve tactical surprise in one critical area. Using Soviet-supplied SS-23 missiles in much greater quantities than it had been thought to possess, the Syrian army succeeded in carrying out a devastating attack on Israeli airfields, destroying large numbers of Israeli aircraft and doing serious damage to ground-based communications and intelligence facilities.

The Syrian success was so great that Israel lost effective control of the skies for the first time in its 47-year existence. As a result, it was impossible for Israeli forces to organize effective counter attacks; instead, they were forced to fight a war of attrition, defending fortified positions. By March 10th, three days after the original attack, Israeli leaders realized that, in light of Israel's overwhelming numerical inferiority such tactics were hopeless in the long run.

Facing this situation, the government in Jerusalem had limited options. One was the use, or perhaps the threatened use, of Israel's secret stockpile of nuclear weapons. These weapons, mounted on medium-range surface-to-surface missiles, could be launched against Syrian or Jordanian targets on very short notice. A majority in the Israeli cabinet, however, felt that the possible consequences of using these weapons--including the possibility, which could not be ruled out, that the Soviet Union would respond with nuclear weapons on behalf of Syria--made the actual use of the weapons impossible in any but the most catastrophic situation. A threat of use, on the other hand, was held to be counterproductive since it would mean officially acknowledging the presence of Israel's nuclear stockpile, a development which would greatly complicate future Israeli relations both with its neighbors and with the United States.

In order to survive in a conventional war, however, it was essential for Israel to replace the equipment, particularly aircraft, which had been lost in the first days of the war. Urgent requests for such assistance were sent to Washington, where they were received with little enthusiasm. U.S. military means were already stretched beyond reasonable limits in Korea and the Gulf. Only by severely reducing war stocks of aircraft and other arms in Europe could enough be sent to Israel to make a significant impact on that country's military needs. Some transfer of arms to Israel from U.S. stocks in Europe was initiated, although at levels far below those which Israel had requested. Despite this, the Israeli government hoped that the quality of its forces would enable it to withstand the Syrian and Jordanian assault with only this limited assistance.

This analysis became irrelevant on March 11, however, as left-wing military units seized power in Cairo. While the revolt was the culmination of pressures which had been building for many years, the rebels' public justification for action at that particular time was opposition to the Egyptian government's neutrality in the on-going Arab/Israeli war. The first official act of the provisional government which was proclaimed on the 12th, was to denounce the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and pledge Egypt's support to the Arab forces currently at war. It was also announced that all U.S. forces were to leave Egypt within one week or face attack.

The nature of the American presence in Egypt, which consisted principally of communications, electronic intelligence, logistical, and similar non combatant units, made it impossible for the U.S. to consider defying the Egyptian order openly. Accordingly, the United States sought only to open communications with the new government with the goal of negotiating an orderly withdrawal of the U.S. presence in Egypt.

As a practical matter, there was little that the new Egyptian government could send in the way of immediate assistance to Syria and Jordan; internal security requirements had to take precedence. In the longer term, however, Israel's strategic position had been dramatically worsened by this event. Realizing this, and also calculating the political implications of the United States' expulsion from Egypt, the Israeli government concluded that it might be possible for Israel to extricate itself from its present disastrous position by inviting U.S. intervention. Accordingly, on March 13, the prime minister of Israel, in a private message to the American president, requested that the U.S. tactical fighter wing in Egypt be transferred to Israel, presumably after transit through a third country.

Despite the genuine desire in Washington to provide assistance to Israel, as well as the overwhelming anti-Arab sentiment in political and public circles which followed the American expulsion from Egypt, the administration and U.S. military leaders were reluctant to take on yet another military commitment. U.S. forces, it was argued, were already drawn down below acceptable levels in Europe and elsewhere due to the transfer of units and equipment to Korea and the Gulf. A major commitment to the Arab/Israeli war in such conditions was clearly impossible. Accordingly, U.S. air units in Egypt were ordered to redeploy to Turkey, and no official acknowledgement was made of the Israeli request.

Faced with this refusal and a deteriorating military position as Egyptian aircraft began to enter the war, the Israeli government concluded that the time had come to play its final card. On March 15, the Israeli prime minister informed the American president that unless U.S. assistance was forthcoming immediately, Israel would have no option but to resort to a nuclear strike against its enemies, the alternative being destruction of the state of Israel.

This declaration shifted the balance of the internal debate in the U.S. administration in favor of those supporting active assistance to Israel. On the morning of March 16, the president announced that U.S. air units would be deployed to Israel, along with large numbers of replacement aircraft. The transfer of the tactical wing formerly in Egypt would begin at once. Even before this could take place, aircraft from the U.S.S. *America*, the only U.S. carrier then in the Mediterranean, began flying missions in support of Israeli positions.

This move brought sharp reactions from both the Soviet Union and America's European allies. NATO governments, the French in particular, were critical of the U.S. intervention, pointing out that the United States was drawing down its forces in Europe at a time when the Soviets were increasing theirs. To allay these concerns, as well as those of



U.S. NATO commanders, American forces in Europe were placed on an increased state of alert, and preparations were begun for the transfer of reserve air units from the continental U.S. This was accompanied by an accelerated call-up of reserves in the United States. The West German and British armies also increased their alert levels and began a partial mobilization of reserves.

The Soviet Union, as expected, was harsh in its criticism of the latest U.S. intervention. Moscow announced that it was the duty of all peace-loving states in the region to resist U.S. aggression, a statement which U.S. analysts interpreted as an explicit Soviet sanction for attacks on U.S. forces by its regional allies, Syria, Libya, and now Egypt.

The fact that all of these countries possessed considerable air and missile assets posed a considerable risk to U.S. air and naval operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. Accordingly, the president was informed that current U.S. naval assets in the region, which consisted of a single carrier task force, were insufficient to ensure their ability to defend themselves. No reinforcements for this force were available, however. The deployment of four carriers each to the Gulf and the Far East left only two carrier task forces in the Atlantic. Other ships, presently being refitted, could not be available for weeks.

Even more ominous were developments in Eastern Europe, where the scope and tempo of Soviet troop deployments had accelerated notably. U.S. and European NATO commanders were unanimous in advising the president that further reinforcements would be needed in Europe to offset these Soviet build-ups. Despite the ongoing mobilization of reserves in the United States, it was clear that this would not result in the actual deployment of troops for some time.

The inevitable conclusion to which U.S. leaders were drawn was that the United States would have to liquidate one or more of its ongoing military commitments in order to maintain a credible presence in the critical European/Mediterranean theater. The extrication of U.S. troops from Iran was judged impossible. The lack of viable local forces in that country made it inevitable that a U.S. pull-out would result in total Soviet domination of Iran, making the already difficult position of the remaining U.S. allies in the Middle East, most importantly Saudi Arabia, totally impossible. A prompt end to the war in the Middle East, on the other hand, required permitting Israel to make use of its nuclear weapons, an escalation which risked provoking a Soviet response.

The only possibility left to U.S. decision makers was a prompt end to the conflict in Korea. In this case, a militarily powerful local ally made it plausible to consider a U.S. pull-out if the immediate threat could be overcome. How to do this, though, remained a problem. U.S. and South Korean military leaders agreed that the present U.S. commitment to the fighting in South Korea was absolutely necessary to resist the continuing North Korean pressure, supported as it was by ever-increasing levels of Soviet and Chinese assistance. Unless North Korea could somehow be forced to accept a cease-fire, U.S. forces would have to remain.

In this context, the administration's internal debate on the renewed use of nuclear weapons in Korea was reopened. A second, limited nuclear strike on North Korea seemed to offer the only possibility of forcing a quick end to the conflict. The risks which had been considered before still existed. This time, however, in the opinion of the president, they were justified by the extreme demands being placed on U.S. forces around the globe. Accordingly, on the morning of March 21st, aircraft from U.S. carriers off the Korean coast carried out a total of twelve nuclear strikes against military forces and logistical support targets inside North Korea, including four close to Pyongyang.

Subsequent events made it clear that in choosing this course of action the U.S. government had seriously underestimated the Soviet reaction. This second U.S. strike convinced Soviet leaders that unless an effective response were made the United States would soon begin to make use of nuclear weapons against Soviet allies in the Middle East, and perhaps against the Soviet Union itself. Accordingly, a previously-planned retaliatory attack was authorized. Within hours of the U.S. strike, the U.S.S. *Kennedy*, from which some of the participating aircraft had been launched, was subjected to intense aerial attack and finally destroyed by a nuclear-tipped, anti-ship missile launched by a Soviet submarine in the northern Sea of Japan. At the same time, Soviet strategic nuclear forces were placed on maximum alert. This last move was in fact primarily defensive. Faced with a demonstrably aggressive U.S. president, Soviet leaders felt that an American preemptive nuclear strike could not be ruled out.

This direct Soviet attack, while not entirely unexpected, caused shock, indignation, and insistent calls for retaliation in Washington. In military circles, however, the mobilization of Soviet strategic assets received more attention. Unless this move was countered, it was held, U.S. freedom of action would be severely constrained in the building crisis and the U.S.S.R. would be emboldened to act more aggressively. The alert level of all U.S. strategic forces, already high, was increased to the highest level. Further, the president believed he had to act once again to show resolve to the Soviet leaders, who

had topped the previous U.S. move by striking U.S. forces directly, making clear that the U.S. would carry the war beyond the last threshold--attack on Soviet territory. On the morning of March 22, U.S. aircraft based in Korea and Japan and on navy carriers struck the main Soviet Pacific naval bases at Vladivostok and Petropavlovsk with conventional munitions. As part of a general offensive against the Soviet Navy in the Pacific, U.S. attack submarines were ordered to seek and attack all Soviet naval assets, including SSBNs.

Soviet reaction to this latest round of escalation was swift. On the 23rd, the U.S. *Trident* base at Bangor, Washington, was struck by two nuclear-tipped cruise missiles launched by a Soviet submarine. Events of the next few days also made it clear that Soviet naval actions would not be confined to the Pacific, as U.S. ships in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean came under attack by the naval and air forces of the Soviet Union and its local allies. The implication of these actions was clear. A full-scale naval war between the great powers was underway, threatening key strategic assets of both sides. The implicit sanctions against the use of nuclear weapons and direct strikes against the territory of the great powers had been violated. From this point onwards, the conflict between the powers would evolve according to its own dynamic rather than being determined by the various third-country crises which had led to its inception.

#### **The Disposition of Forces in March 1995**

Prior to the destruction of the U.S.S. *Kennedy*, the United States had deployed ten carrier battle groups and four surface action groups. After the Soviet attack, three carrier task forces and one surface action group remained in the Far East, directly involved in operations in Korea. Four carrier task forces were deployed to the Arabian Sea/Persian Gulf, providing air support to U.S. forces in Iran, Oman, and Pakistan. A single carrier task force and surface action group were in the Mediterranean; these were directly engaged in operations stemming from the Arab/Israeli war. Only two carrier groups and two surface action groups remained in the Atlantic.

As of March 23, U.S. naval forces in the Far East were under attack by Soviet air and naval units, while U.S. ships in the Mediterranean were subject to air and missile attacks by Soviet allies, principally Libya and Syria. Although Soviet allies were also present in Southwest Asia, the principal threat to U.S. naval forces there, as well as in the Atlantic, was posed by Soviet submarines and long-range aircraft.

In addition to its longstanding deployments in Europe, U.S. ground and air forces were actively engaged in combat in Israel, Southwest Asia, and Korea. U.S. forces in Israel consisted only of a single tactical air wing, but reinforcements and spare aircraft were urgently needed to maintain American and Israeli forces against the combined attack of Syrian, Egyptian, and Jordanian forces. Eight army brigades and four tactical air wings were in Korea. Since the second U.S. nuclear strike against North Korea, these faced not only Korean troops but Soviet air units. Finally, U.S. deployments in the South Asia and the Persian Gulf consisted of four division-equivalents of Army troops, of which three were in Iran and the other split between Pakistan and Oman, a full division of Marine forces in Iran, and six air force and two Marine tactical air wings.

## **VI. SCENARIO GAMMA: CONFLICTS IN EUROPE LEAD TO U.S./SOVIET WAR IN THE YEAR 2000**

In this scenario, we postulate the emergence of a widening political and economic gap between the United States and its European allies, as well as decreasing political cohesion among the nations of Western Europe. In a parallel development, we postulate increasing tension between the Soviet Union and the countries of the Warsaw Pact. While these developments lead the Soviet Union to concentrate increasingly on European matters, in an effort to bring its allies into line and to woo the increasingly independent West Europeans, the United States responds initially by shifting its attention to East Asian and the third world interests. A deteriorating situation, however, forces the U.S. again to pay attention to European developments and, eventually, it is drawn into conflict there.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The nations of Western Europe and, to a lesser extent, the United States experienced a serious economic downturn in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Contributing to this trend was the renewed rise in oil prices which followed the Iranian victory in the Gulf War in 1989. In Europe, global problems were exacerbated by the growing obsolescence of productive facilities and the persistence of social and economic rigidities. These problems aggravated U.S./European economic disputes, and generally contributed to a lessening of interest in security cooperation across the Atlantic, particularly following the victories of left-wing political parties such as Labour in the U.K. and the West German SPD. America's growing inclination in the early 1990s to pursue military initiatives in the third world, was opposed by the majority of European governments and served to worsen the transatlantic relationship further. As a result, the U.S. began to scale down its presence in Europe. This eventually resulted in the total withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from the continent, although some tactical weapons remained in the U.K., and the reduction of the U.S. forces in Europe to only two divisions and six tactical air wings based in Great Britain, Italy, Turkey, and the low countries. No U.S. forces remained in Germany after 1998.

In Eastern Europe, anti-Soviet sentiments flared into open revolt first in Poland in 1997, and then in East Germany. Problems in Poland were blamed by the Soviets on the relatively open policy taken by the Polish government which allowed an increase of Western economic and social influence. In reaction, the U.S.S.R. attempted to force East Germany to break its ties with the West. This Soviet policy backfired, however, when an abrupt decline in the East German standard of living led the population of the DDR to adopt a much more militant anti-Soviet stance than before.

After a period of increasingly radical left-wing rule from 1990 to 1997, political power in the Federal Republic of Germany was assumed by a coalition of the right and the far right. This was due in large part to West German reactions to Soviet repression in Eastern Europe. The new German government repudiated ties with the West, as well as the East, and openly sought the reunification of Germany and its restoration to great power status.

Conditions in East Germany continued to deteriorate, as increasing official repression fueled popular dissent. In the early months of the year 2000, the mutiny of a unit of the East German army sparked a general revolt and, soon thereafter, an international confrontation as West German units moved to assist the East German rebels.

Concern for developments in Germany, as well as in Eastern Europe, had led to an improvement in relations between the U.S. and other nations of Western Europe after 1998 and to a renewed U.S. commitment to the defense of Europe. At the same time, the United States continued its policy of aiding forces opposing Soviet-backed regimes in the third world. Eventually, Soviet leaders became convinced that in order to defeat the growing threat of West German revanchism it was necessary to take preemptive actions against the U.S. forces which were still being rebuilt in Europe. When the U.S. retaliated with nuclear weapons against Soviet naval bases in the Arctic and the Far East, both powers were committed to war.

The principal events leading up to the confrontation in the year 2000 are set out in the chronology below.

#### CHRONOLOGY

1987-89	Recession in the United States and Western Europe.
1988	Labour Government elected in Great Britain; demands the withdrawal of all U.S. nuclear weapons from the U.K.
1989	New U.S. administration pledges to continue active foreign policy stance.

- 1989 Iran's victory in Gulf War leads to a steady increase in its influence throughout the Middle East; oil prices begin to rise.
- Revival of the West German anti-nuclear movement; calls for the removal of U.S. nuclear weapons.
- 1990 Nicaraguan government agrees to share power with domestic opponents; end of "Contra" insurgency.
- U.S.S.R. completes the effective pacification of Afghanistan, improves relations with Iran.
- West German government falls; coalition of Social Democrat and Free Democrat parties takes power; removal of U.S. nuclear weapons becomes the official policy goal of the German government.
- 1990-95 Continued economic difficulties in Western Europe; steady improvement in the U.S. economy.
- Beginnings of ethnic dissidence in Yugoslavia.
- 1992 U.S. plans major troop withdrawals from Europe; plan approved by NATO in December.
- 1993 Labour Party loses British parliamentary election; Conservative/Social Democratic coalition takes office, but does not immediately modify security policy.
- Military coup in Pakistan.
- Growing Soviet-backed insurgency in Baluchistan.
- U.S. initiates plan for the withdrawal of 150,000 troops from Europe by the year 2000.
- 1994 Secret Soviet/Yugoslav security pact.
- Soviet/Pakistani air clashes; U.S. intervenes by sending AWACS and carrier-based aircraft to Pakistan; two Soviet aircraft downed by U.S. planes; U.S. intervention strengthens the position of the Pakistani government.
- U.S. aircraft deployed to eastern Turkey.
- 1995 Pro-NATO government elected in France.
- Social Democrat and "Green" parties form West German coalition government; appearance of far right New German Party; German government demands the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Germany.
- Soviet advisors present in Yugoslavia.
- 1996 Unrest in Poland as government seeks to gain more freedom from Soviet domination.
- NATO summit meeting produces compromise on German demands, NATO integrated command structure dissolved.
- 1997
- Jan New administration seeks to distance U.S. from Europe and concentrate on other parts of the world, repudiates summit agreement; accelerated withdrawal of troops from Germany begun with all troops to be out of Europe by the year 2000.

Spring	Succession of anti-Soviet demonstrations in Poland; fraternization between Polish security forces and demonstrators.
Apr 28	U.S.S.R. warns that Soviet forces will intervene if needed to prevent planned May Day demonstration in Warsaw.
May 1	Massive demonstration in Warsaw leads to serious conflict between Poles and Soviet forces; clashes throughout Poland the following week.
May 8	Forced resignation of Polish government as pro-Soviet forces regain control of Poland.
May 10	Anglo-French summit conference, the two countries agree to cooperate more closely in foreign and security policy.
Summer/ Fall	Sino-American pressure on Vietnam; U.S./Vietnamese air clashes.
	U.S. and Pakistan support new anti-Soviet Afghan insurgency; U.S. aircraft based in Pakistan.
Aug	U.S.S.R. forces change of government in East Germany; new government curtails ties with the West, leading to a sharp economic decline in the DDR.
Aug 20	Yugoslav Independence Front (YIF) proclaimed.
Sep 1	West German Chancellor resigns forcing early elections; right wing forces dominate new government; withdrawal of U.S. troops accelerated, with French and British troops to leave as well.

#### 1998

Spring	France and Great Britain provide covert support to YIF.
Mar 1	Summit of Western leaders proposes that U.S. forces be reintroduced into France and reinforced in Great Britain, the low countries, and Italy.
Summer	Increasing internal opposition to the East German government.
Aug	U.S. forces begin to redeploy to Europe as planned by summit agreement.

#### 1999

Winter	Violent street demonstrations in East Germany.
Mar	Soviet troops in East Germany reinforced.
Summer/ Fall	West Germany increases military preparations and is reported ready to deploy nuclear weapons in the near future; continuing violence and increasing Soviet presence in East Germany; West German agents suspected of encouraging violent protest in the East.

#### 2000

Jan 1	Bomb attack on Soviet military compound in DDR; Soviet and East German authorities launch massive security campaign.
Mar 1	Mutiny of an East German army battalion sparks revolt of civilians and individual military personnel throughout East Germany
Mar 3	West German forces attempt to assist refugees to cross over the intra-German border, leading to clashes with East German and Soviet forces



Mar 6	Major battles underway between West German and Soviet forces.
Mar 10	U.S.S.R. launches full-scale invasion of West Germany, preempts against NATO and U.S. air and naval forces in Europe and the Atlantic.
Mar 11	U.S. forces carry out nuclear strikes against Soviet air and naval bases in the Far East and the Kola Peninsula, and conventional strikes against Soviet forces in Germany and Eastern Europe.
Mar 13	General naval war underway; both powers committed to war in Europe.

## BACKGROUND

The sources of the NATO/Soviet war which broke out in the year 2000 can be traced to events as far back as the late 1980s. In this section we survey the period 1987-1995, identifying the factors which contributed most importantly to the emergence of military conflict. In the following section, we examine in greater detail events during the critical five years which immediately preceded the outbreak of war.

### THE U.S. AND NATO, 1987-1995

Both the U.S. and the countries of Western Europe went through a cyclical recession in the late 1980s which was exacerbated by the rise in oil prices which followed the Iranian victory in the Gulf War in 1989. While the U.S. economy recovered by 1990, the economies of Europe remained much weaker. Insufficient investment in plant and equipment had left Europe with a large number of obsolete manufacturing facilities and prevented it from catching up with the United States and Japan in the high technology sector. At the same time, labor market rigidities resulted in high wage costs and an inappropriately trained labor force, keeping Europe in an uncompetitive position vis-a-vis the rapidly industrializing countries of East Asia in such basic manufacturing sectors as steel, textiles and shipbuilding. The results of these shortcomings included high unemployment, low growth rates, and high government budget and international trade deficits.

The Europeans' position stood in particularly sharp contrast to the economies of East Asia, where a combination of low costs and rapid innovation resulted in sustained economic growth throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This mutual prosperity, and the resulting growth of markets, worked to mitigate the trade difficulties and disagreements which had threatened relations between the U.S. and Asian countries in the mid-1980s. The European countries, in contrast, turned ever more inward, seeking solutions to their economic problems in government subsidization and protectionism. It was natural in these circumstances, that when the U.S. economy began to improve after 1990, America would

turn increasingly to Asia in its search for active economic partners, while Western Europe--and particularly West Germany--increasingly sought markets in the regulated and even less competitive economies of the East European nations.

These shifting economic patterns were not without political repercussions. In general, persistent economic difficulties worked against incumbent governments. Yet, while it was economic issues which were foremost in the minds of Europeans when they voted opposition parties into power, the new officials moved also to implement the security and foreign policy aspects of their parties' programs. The content of these foreign policy shifts varied according to the nature of the chief opposition parties in the major European countries. In general, however, each new government proved considerably less accommodating towards the United States than had been their predecessors through most of the 1980s.

A Labour Party government came into power in Great Britain in 1988, leading to a radical shift in the U.K.'s foreign and defense policy priorities. Total British defense spending declined every year from 1988 through 1992, leading, among other things, to cancellation of all British nuclear programs, including the *Trident* ballistic missile submarine. The new government announced its intention to phase out British nuclear forces altogether as the existing *Polaris* SSBNs and tactical weapons were retired.

During the electoral campaign of 1988, the Labour Party had also called for the withdrawal of all U.S. nuclear systems from Britain. Once in office, the Labour government began intensive negotiations with the United States and the other NATO countries on this subject. In the course of these negotiations, the new prime minister sought to reassure his allies as to Britain's continuing commitment to NATO. He emphasized the overwhelming importance of the nuclear issue to the British electorate. If an acceptable arrangement on nuclear weapons could not be reached, the leader warned, political pressure on his government to take more drastic action would mount, leaving British cooperation in other aspects of NATO in question.

In the end, an agreement was reached after a series of meetings with a part of the United States. By the terms of the agreement, the United States agreed to remove nuclear-armed cruise missiles from Europe and to reduce its nuclear arsenal. The understanding--at least in principle--was that the United States would

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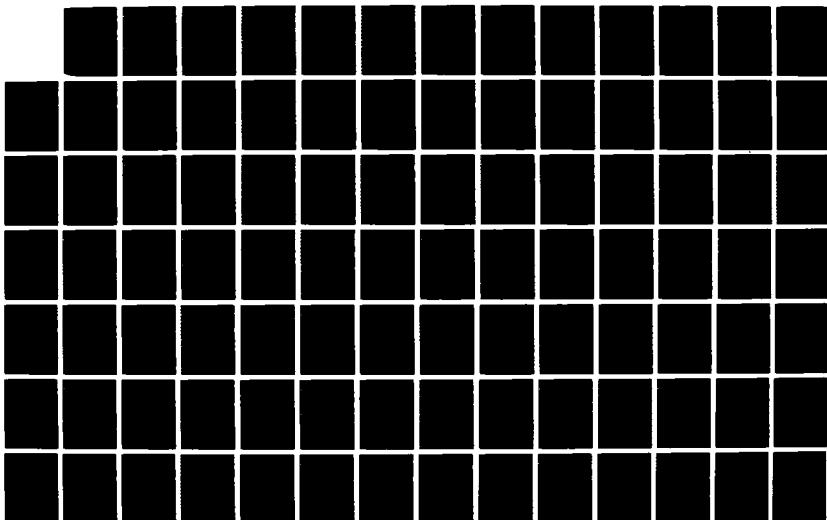
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governments in case of an "exceptional threat to Britain and the Atlantic Alliance," an eventuality whose specific nature was carefully left undefined.

In return for this concession, the U.S. successfully deferred discussion of the remainder of the American nuclear stockpile in Great Britain. The two governments agreed that this issue would be discussed in the context of a general review and renegotiation of U.S. and NATO basing arrangements in the U.K. which would begin in two years. These talks were indeed started in the fall of 1991. Long before their completion, however, the Labour government fell from power, and the issue lost much of its urgency. In the end, tactical nuclear weapons remained in Britain throughout the 1990s.

Despite their rather limited result, the 1988 negotiations were heralded by anti-nuclear forces throughout Europe as proof that the deployment of nuclear weapons was not irreversible. This perception was especially strong in the Federal Republic of Germany and strengthened the resurgent pacifist movement in German politics and society.

Although the Federal Republic of Germany remained America's closest ally in Europe, the political position of its pro-American government was increasingly precarious. The Christian Democratic Party (CDU) emerged from the federal elections of 1987 with a slim plurality and, by renewing the coalition with the Liberals (FDP), was able to reconstitute a shaky government. The government's room for maneuver was limited, however, particularly on security and nuclear issues. The uncharacteristically poor performance of the German economy after the election led to pressures for additional social and economic expenditures necessitating major cuts in defense programs. After 1989, the success of the British government in expelling U.S. cruise missiles gave new life to the German anti-nuclear movement and contributed to the resurgence of the far-left Green Party.

In France, the neo-Gaullist government which came into power in 1988 also kept its distance from the United States. The French president and his cabinet were strongly anti-Communist and had little sympathy even for the British Labour government, but France sought independence and freedom-of-action above all and was not prepared to cooperate closely either with the United States or with its European neighbors on security or other purely political matters.

The persistence of economic recession led to increased social tensions throughout Europe in the early 1990s, and contributed to further changes of governments. Pressures increased on incumbent governments and, in some cases, parties newly arrived in power

found it difficult to deliver on the promises of renewed prosperity which they had made while still in opposition.

After several years of eroding popularity, the German government fell in 1990. Elections were held in March of that year; the CDU lost decisively. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) emerged as the largest single party, but lacked a clear majority. The Green Party received an unprecedented 15 percent of votes cast, but refused to enter into any government coalition. As a result, the SPD formed a government in coalition with the Free Democrats, who had succeeded in retaining their modest power base. The new government embraced the demands of anti-nuclear groups and agreed to work towards the removal of all nuclear weapons from Germany. The new government also promised to improve relations with the nations of Eastern Europe and to negotiate bilateral security arrangements with East Germany, expanding on the development of strong economic ties which had progressed under the previous CDU government.

Within a month of taking office, the new Chancellor announced that Germany would not go along with NATO plans to modernize short range nuclear forces in Germany, previously agreed to by Bonn, unless the United States demonstrated that concrete progress was being made in the long-stalled arms reduction talks with the Soviet Union. As a result, the modernization plan was delayed indefinitely.

In September 1990, citing the lack of any activity, let alone progress, in the arms negotiations, the German government began to formulate demands for the removal of U.S. nuclear-armed systems from Germany. Presentations were made both within NATO organizations and in bilateral talks with the United States, but little progress was made. The U.S. administration was determined not to repeat the mistake of its predecessor in agreeing to the withdrawal of cruise missiles from the U.K. Further, the president and his advisors were convinced that the removal of American nuclear weapons from Germany would lead inevitably to similar demands by Italy and the Low Countries, virtually denying any possibility of protecting U.S. forces in Europe by threatening the initiation of nuclear conflict. Unwilling to accept such a development, particularly in view of NATO's continued conventional weakness, the American administration resisted the German pressures adamantly. The SPD and German anti-nuclear groups, meanwhile, resorted to a public campaign of increasingly harsh anti-American rhetoric. A number of the smaller members of NATO chose to follow the German example, seeking to distance themselves from the United States and to improve their relations with the East.

Not surprisingly, a growing number of military planners and politicians in the United States, including members of the president's party, began calling for a reexamination of American commitments in Europe. For some time, the recurring economic disagreements between the U.S. and European countries had reawakened debate in the U.S. over the cost and relative burden of the American military presence in Europe. By mid-1992, a detailed proposal was being circulated in Washington which envisioned the withdrawal of 150,000 U.S. troops, one half the total deployment, from Europe by the end of the decade. A number of key U.S. leaders had concluded that, in light of the many instances of European intransigence encountered over the past few years, strong U.S. actions were necessary.

In November 1992, the force reduction plan was approved by the just-re-elected president and presented privately to the NATO allies. At the same time, the U.S. delegation to the MBFR talks in Vienna proposed that the two great powers reduce their force levels in Europe by one-half, emphasizing that the U.S. was willing to take immediate action if an agreement could be reached. The Soviets, well aware that the United States was anxious to go forward with its own plans, offered an agreement-in-principle, but no timetable for the withdrawal of its own troops. Even this somewhat dubious response, however, was seized upon by NATO to portray the planned U.S. troop withdrawals as part of a general reduction of great power forces in Europe. The force reduction plan was approved overwhelmingly by the U.S. Congress, and took effect on January 1, 1993.

Elsewhere in Europe, the British Labour government fared only marginally better than the German Christian Democrats, surviving to the end of the normal parliamentary term. In the elections of 1993, however, the Labour Party lost its majority and was replaced by a coalition of the Conservative and Social Democratic Parties. This electoral result was due primarily to the failure of the outgoing government's economic policies; considerable support remained for its international and security positions. Realizing this, the victorious parties had made it clear both before and after the election that they had no intention of going back on the decision to ban nuclear weapons from Britain. Even so, the new government sought to improve relations with the United States and to work towards a more effective European security regime.

A less dramatic, but still significant political shift took place in France in 1995, when the presidential elections brought a government of the center-left to power. Although the new president was as eager as his Gaullist predecessor to maintain a certain distance

from the United States, his government proved considerably more interested in the prospects of intra-European cooperation on security and political matters. Relations with London, in particular, improved notably.

Despite these hopeful signs from London and Paris, nearly a decade of deteriorating relations with Europe had a profound impact on American attitudes. Renewed and more powerful calls were heard for the abandonment of any U.S. commitment to Europe following the announcement of the force reduction plan. While no official steps were taken by the U.S. government, it was clear by 1995 that European questions were of diminishing importance to American policy makers in comparison with developments in East Asia and the third world.

### **The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe**

In contrast to the nations of Western Europe, the Soviet Union and its East European allies enjoyed a period of relative prosperity in the early 1990s. A major energy producer, the U.S.S.R. benefited from the higher oil and gas prices which prevailed after 1989, as they increased its hard currency income and provided an important tool of economic influence in Soviet foreign relations, especially with European countries. At the same time, East European nations, primarily Poland and East Germany, took advantage of the more accommodating postures of a number of Western countries to upgrade their economic links with the West, receiving much-needed financial and technological assistance as well as securing a hard currency market for their mineral and agricultural products.

Economic success contributed in large measure to improving the social climate in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and the first years of the 1990s. Even Poland, a dangerous trouble spot a decade earlier, seemed relatively peaceful. Over time, however, Soviet leaders began to realize that the very factors which permitted the relative tranquility of Eastern Europe were undermining Soviet influence there. The major problem was the development of increasingly complex social and economic ties among the nations of Eastern and Western Europe. The victory of the SPD in West Germany accelerated this process notably. Although the German Social Democrats sought to distance themselves from the West, their "new opening to the East," by its very success, threatened to provide an alternative to Soviet domination, at least in certain areas. Soviet military supremacy was unchallenged, but the U.S.S.R.'s control of domestic economics and even politics and



foreign policy outside the core security area, was increasingly questioned throughout the Warsaw Pact.

This threatened loss of Soviet control was most pointed in Poland. Ironically, while the severe economic hardships of the mid-1980s had contributed in large measure to the destruction of the Polish workers' movement, the relative prosperity of the early 1990s, along with the increased contact with the West which made prosperity possible, served to revive it. By 1993, the Soviet Communist Party was sternly admonishing its Polish comrades to increase vigilance against anti-Socialist influences in Polish society.

The only East European country which experienced visible unrest in this period was Yugoslavia. In that country, the contrast between the relatively prosperous, Western-oriented, northern republics and the poorer and more traditionalist, but politically dominant, Serbia, led to increasing dissent and social unrest. Groups proclaiming themselves to be "Croatian nationalists" reappeared in the West, staging attacks on Yugoslav diplomats and commercial aircraft. As opposition to the government grew into open and violent dissension in the the northern republics of Croatia and Slovenia, Belgrade sought to improve its relations with the Soviet Union in hope of receiving economic and security assistance. A much publicized series of economic agreements were signed between Yugoslavia and the U.S.S.R. in 1994. Secretly, these agreements were linked to a pledge of Soviet security and military assistance. Together, the problems in Poland and opportunities in Yugoslavia worked to focus Soviet attention on Europe at precisely the time when the interest of the United States was shifting elsewhere. Events in the third world served to reinforce this trend.

### **The Great Powers and the Third World**

While far-reaching political and economic transformations were underway in Europe, the most visible signs of competition between the great powers, and the principal sources of international tension in the period from 1987 to 1995, were in the third world where conflict between Soviet- and U.S.-backed forces flared in Central America, southern Africa, and most seriously in South Asia. While none of these situations led to sustained conflict between the great powers, they served to maintain and increase the level of tension and mutual distrust between them, and thus contributed to the conditions which made the outbreak of war in Europe possible.

The first significant third world event of this period involved neither great power directly, but its effects on both were far-reaching. By 1989, Iran was clearly prevailing in

its long war with Iraq. Since 1986, Iranian forces had advanced steadily, albeit slowly, in a series of offensives in southern Iraq. The capture of Basra, the key city of southern Iraq, in February 1989, sealed the fate of the Baghdad regime. With its army disintegrating, the Iraqi government sued for peace unconditionally on the first of March. The death of the Ayatollah Khomeini three months earlier left the Iranian government free to pursue negotiations. The conclusion was a treaty giving Iran undisputed mastery of the northern end of the Persian Gulf. In addition to losing direct access to the Gulf, Iraq was forced to pay reparations which, in practical terms, amounted to giving Iran control of the larger part of Iraqi oil output for years to come. Baghdad preserved in the negotiations only the continued existence of the regime of Saddam Hussein.

More importantly in the long run, Iran gained enormous prestige throughout the region. The instruments of its power were the continued influence of Khomeini's successors among the Shi'ite populations of the Gulf states, from which Iran had demonstrated its ability to draw fanatical supporters whenever the need arose, and the conventional threat posed by the Iranian Armed Forces which, with the elimination of Iraqi military power, now posed a direct threat to Kuwait and even to the key northern oil producing regions of Saudi Arabia.

The first observable impact of the new balance of power in the Gulf was Iran's successful effort to push up the international price of oil. By a combination of diplomacy and thinly veiled coercion, Iran convinced the smaller Gulf states, along with Libya and Algeria, to cooperate in restricting output and raising prices. While Saudi Arabia did not participate in this effort, Iran's position was sufficiently strong to keep the Saudis from increasing their own production to reverse the movement of prices. The timing of this initiative was propitious for Iran, as it coincided with the exhaustion of reserves in a number of the smaller non-OPEC producers which had greatly increased production during the period of low oil prices of the late 1980s.

Events in other regions of the world during this period led to more direct clashes of great power interests and ambitions. After 1989, the new U.S. administration stepped up support for anti-Soviet insurgent groups in six nations (Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Kampuchea, Mozambique, and Nicaragua). This more aggressive U.S. policy became evident first in Central America. In 1988 and 1989, increases in the quality and quantity of U.S. material support allowed the "Contra" rebels fighting the pro-Soviet government of Nicaragua to make significant gains. By the end of this period, the "Contras" controlled much of the rural area of northern Nicaragua containing the greater part of the country's

agricultural wealth, leaving the government in Managua entirely dependent on Cuba and the Soviet Union for economic, as well as military, survival. Further, the air and naval superiority of the United States in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific, as well as the increasing control of the "Contras" over Nicaragua's Atlantic coast threatened to close these vital links. Faced with the prospect of isolation and defeat, the Sandinista government underwent a significant internal shake-up and chose to negotiate with its adversaries. Daniel Ortega and several other key figures fled to Cuba. In January 1990, a regional peace accord was signed by the new Nicaraguan government and "Contra" leaders, as well as by neighboring countries. By its terms, the remaining Sandinistas agreed to an interim power-sharing arrangement with their domestic opponents to be followed by internationally-supervised elections. All Cuban and other Soviet Bloc advisors were to leave Nicaragua within thirty days.

The successful implementation of this treaty boosted U.S. influence throughout the region and provided a major political success for the U.S. administration; it ensured the president's reelection in 1992. The heavy-handed methods by which it was obtained, however, were widely criticized by U.S. allies in Europe, of which the most vocal were the British, and contributed to the general deterioration of U.S./European relations which marked the early 1990s. The outcome of the Central American conflict also led the leaders of the Soviet Union to conclude that, given the assertiveness demonstrated by two successive U.S. administrations, the costs and benefits of acquiring and supporting isolated third world allies should be reexamined.

Events in Southern Africa reinforced this conclusion. U.S. support for insurgent groups opposing the governments of Angola and Mozambique, although much less extensive than that provided to the "Contras," had enabled these groups to expand the scope of their operations significantly by the year 1990. Following its defeat in Nicaragua, the Soviet Union concluded for a time that it could not afford a further reversal. Accordingly, the level of aid provided to the governments in Luanda and Maputo was increased. Most importantly, the number of Cuban troops and East European advisors in the two countries rose sharply. These tactics enabled the pro-Soviet governments of southern Africa to regain the initiative in the struggle with U.S.-backed insurgents. The cost in men and material to the Soviet Union and its allies, however, was extremely high; by 1992 the U.S.S.R. was recommending privately to its African allies that they attempt to reach negotiated settlements with their armed opponents.

The reexamination of Soviet goals and methods which followed the events in Central America and southern Africa did not lead to a general softening of Soviet policy towards the third world. Rather, Soviet leaders came to see virtue in focusing on developments closer to home, where the geo-strategic advantage lay with it rather than with the United States. In these circumstances, South and Southwest Asia increasingly dominated Soviet third world strategy.

The situation in Afghanistan, of course, had remained a central focus of Soviet effort throughout this period. By the end of the 1980s, the Soviet Union had been able to diminish the scale of its counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan considerably, successfully playing on internal divisions in the rebel movement and the rivalry between rebel leaders and Afghanistan's traditional tribal elites. Soviet and Afghan forces were also ruthless in destroying the rebels' economic base, not hesitating to move civilians away from areas of guerrilla activity forcibly. In these conditions, and despite U.S. attempts to provide them with advanced weapons and other support, the Afghan Mujaheddin were eliminated as a serious fighting force by 1990.

Elsewhere in the region, Soviet efforts to improve relations with Iran, which had been only modestly successful for many years, began to bring impressive results after the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini and the conclusion of the Gulf War. Iran's desire to dominate the Gulf required it to upgrade and modernize its military forces, and in particular its air force. Freed from the economic burdens of war, it began to do so in the years following 1990, and found in the Soviet Union a willing supplier of advanced weapons.

While the two countries remained far apart on ideological grounds, the Soviet and Iranian governments realized that they had a number of strategic interests in common; the most obvious being the weakening of the remaining pro-Western states in the region. In this policy, Iran and the Soviet Union were joined by Syria, whose role was principally to keep up pressure on Israel and to maintain control of Lebanon, while using its hegemony over the radicalized Palestinian movement to sponsor terrorist attacks throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. Iran, for its part, exploited its influence with the Shi'ite community to keep up pressure on Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf States. The increased financial, logistical, and technical assistance provided by the Soviet Union for terrorist attacks ensured that they were increasingly frequent, as well as deadly.

While Iran and Syria were stirring up trouble for Western interests in the Middle East, the Soviet Union turned its own attention to another seemingly vulnerable U.S. ally

in the region, Pakistan. The collapse of the Afghan insurgency had been a serious blow to the prestige of President Zia-al-Haq's regime in Islamabad. Zia's support of the Mujaheddin had always been controversial, and now seemed clearly to have been a misguided policy. It had antagonized the Soviet Union--now Pakistan's neighbor by way of the large Soviet forces remaining in Afghanistan--without guaranteeing a countervailing security commitment from the United States.

A more immediate concern were the estimated four to five million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. With the consolidation of Soviet control over their homeland, the vast majority of these people were either unable or unwilling to return, choosing instead to settle in and around Pakistani urban centers, where their presence exacerbated existing ethnic and economic problems and raised the level of social tensions dangerously. The fact that many of the former Afghan guerrillas had kept their weapons added a further element of risk to the situation. Throughout 1991 and 1992 there were protests and riots of varying severity, ranging up to armed clashes between Afghans and local populations.

The Pakistani Army, of necessity, was called on increasingly to preserve order in the cities. This doomed the tentative process of political liberalization which had begun in the late 1980s by reinforcing the role of the armed services in the government. As a result, political opposition was increasingly radicalized, and political violence in the major cities was added to ethnic clashes. The unsettled state of affairs also allowed other long-standing conflicts within Pakistan to reemerge. Important among these was the growth of a separatist movement among the Baluchi populations of western Pakistan; the Baluchis began to receive Iranian, and Soviet support, separately, after 1992.

As a result of these problems, President Zia's leadership was called increasingly into question within the ruling military elite. This situation reached a crisis point in July 1993 when military units in the capital staged an armed coup. After several days of fighting in and around Islamabad, the rebel forces managed to take control. President Zia was killed in the fighting, and a new ruling military council was organized from among the leaders of the rebellion.

Since the grounds for the coup d'etat had lain in personal and tactical differences between the former president and his opponents, rather than in substantive or ideological disagreements, the political complexion of the new government was similar to that of the old. The overall effectiveness of Pakistan's armed forces, and more generally the authority of the central government, however, had been diminished appreciably. The casualties in

men and equipment resulting from the period of internal fighting were considerable, and the purge of individuals who had been prominent in the old regime which followed did considerable damage to the solidarity and authority of the officer corp. More significant in the long run, the reputation for effectiveness and professionalism previously enjoyed by the armed forces among the population at large was tarnished seriously.

The unprecedented upsurge in activity by Baluchi separatist groups in western Pakistan which followed the change of regime in Islamabad, reflected this weakness. The success of the rebels in small-scale operations against the Pakistani Army in late 1993 led to increased Soviet assistance in the following year. Pakistani intelligence soon heard reports of Baluchi insurgent training facilities inside Afghanistan, and even of Afghan advisors accompanying insurgent bands on forays into Pakistan. Faced with a mounting threat in the remote but strategically crucial region, the Pakistani government sought assistance.

From the United States, Pakistan received accelerated deliveries of advanced weapons, particularly helicopter gunships, which were essential for successful counter-insurgency operations in the vast desert stretches of Baluchistan. Other allies also came to Pakistan's assistance, including Saudi Arabia, which provided much needed financial support, and the People's Republic of China, which feared the increase in Soviet influence, and that of India, implied by the weakening of Pakistan. While its ability to provide relevant military assistance was limited, China's political and diplomatic support was valuable.

The initial efforts of the Pakistani government to come to grips with the situation in Baluchistan led to a potentially serious escalation of the conflict. Air power was brought to bear increasingly on rebel camps and supply sources, most of which were located near the Afghan border, the Kabul regime became more open in its support of the rebels. By the spring of 1994, Pakistani aircraft had clashed repeatedly with units of the Afghan Air Force; casualties were suffered on both sides.

In the end, this escalation worked to Pakistan's advantage. The visibility of Afghan and Soviet support for the Baluchi movement stiffened the resolve of the Pakistani government and increased its popular legitimacy in the face of a foreign threat. It also led to a decision by the United States to become more directly involved in the situation. A detachment of U.S. AWACS aircraft were deployed to Pakistan from Egypt in April, 1994. In addition, two U.S. aircraft carriers took up position off the southern coast of Baluchistan. While the missions flown by the aircraft based on the U.S. ships were

officially described as "reconnaissance," they resulted in clashes with Afghan forces and, on June 1, in the downing of two Afghan aircraft by U.S. F-14s.

This incident marked the climax of the operation. In the following weeks, Afghan forces became much more cautious in their selection of missions, limiting their actions to the interception of Pakistani aircraft which actually crossed the border. At the same time, the clear demonstration of U.S. support for Pakistan further increased the prestige and authority of the Islamabad regime, which in turn worked to upgrade the effectiveness of the armed forces. The elimination of direct foreign intervention and restoration of the government's popular legitimacy restored a more normal balance of power throughout Pakistan. In such circumstances, the anti-insurgency capabilities of the Pakistani armed forces were once again, as had been the case under President Zia, capable of dealing with threats from separatist groups and other dissidents.

The events of 1994 marked a general turning point in U.S. fortunes in the larger Southwest Asia/Middle East region. The prompt and effective U.S. response in Pakistan encouraged the remaining American allies in the region to seek closer public ties with the United States, and in particular to enter into additional security arrangements with the Americans. Agreements were reached for the periodic deployment of U.S. tactical air units to Saudi, as well as Omani bases. Facilities in Oman for the support of forces assigned to the U.S. Central Command also were upgraded and the permanent U.S. presence on Omani territory increased.

Another success for U.S. Middle East diplomacy was the conclusion of an agreement-in-principle between Israel and Jordan concerning joint sovereignty over the West Bank. While the high level of violence in the much-disputed territory, due in large part to the work of Syrian-supported extremist groups, prevented the immediate implementation of many of the agreement's provisions, the existence of the pact made it possible for much closer security ties to evolve between Washington and Amman.

In a final related development, the United States reached an agreement with Turkey in September 1994 which led to the permanent stationing of U.S. tactical aircraft at NATO air bases in eastern Turkey. Turkish motives for this included Ankara's desire for a counterweight to the increased Soviet influence in Tehran. A more immediate concern was the revival by Iran of its traditional policy of encouraging (and financing) unrest among the Kurdish populations of eastern Turkey and northern Iraq. This practice, which had been suspended following the end of the Gulf War, was resumed, according to Turkish

intelligence sources, in the early months of 1994. Since Iraq no longer posed a threat to anyone, it could only be concluded that the Kurds' Iranian and Soviet sponsors initiated the action as a means of weakening the government in Ankara. Concrete evidence of U.S. support for Turkey was thus especially welcome.

## **EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN 1995**

Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1995 were strained, but had not reached an unprecedented level of hostility. The position of the two powers reflected the asymmetry of their policies and achievements in the preceding period. The United States had been generally successful in its diplomatic and military dealings with the nations of Asia and the third world, maintaining close and cordial relations with its traditional Far Eastern allies and steadily improving its relations with China. Events in Central America, Africa, and South Asia had demonstrated the willingness and ability of the United States to use both direct and indirect military means to protect friends and dispose of enemies. In Europe, the U.S. had done less well, encountering serious difficulties in dealing with allies and making little progress with the the nations of Eastern Europe. Recent developments, particularly the shift in British politics, left open the possibility that American fortunes in Europe might improve; but, on the whole, the American position on the continent was not promising.

The Soviet Union, in contrast, had reason to be pleased with the results of its European diplomacy. While the Western alliance was more divided than ever in its history, the position of Germany in particular seeming increasingly uncertain, Soviet control over Eastern Europe, although showing signs of possible erosion in Poland, still appeared to be adequate. At the same time, third world reverses noted above had highlighted limits on the Soviet Union's ability to project power to distant regions, while emphasizing the great flexibility of U.S. capabilities. Accordingly, it was principally to Europe, East and West, that Soviet leaders turned in search of opportunities for the expansion of their influence in the late 1990s.

At first glance, the prospect of conflict between the great powers in these circumstances seemed remote, given the differing emphasis of their respective foreign policy goals; in reality, the risk was growing. An important ingredient in the preservation of peace between the powers had always been the mutual acceptance of a number of tacit understandings concerning the status quo in Europe. In the 1990s, a number of these implicit agreements were being questioned: Soviet actions in Yugoslavia, if successful,



would result in the extension of Soviet influence into a region whose neutrality had been assumed for nearly fifty years, with far-reaching consequences for the overall status of Europe. On the other hand, pressure for greater autonomy in economic and diplomatic decision-making on the part of Poland was a threat to Soviet influence in a country whose control was believed by all Soviet leaders to be of critical importance to the security of the U.S.S.R. Finally, the increasingly independent behavior of the Federal Republic of Germany threatened, at least potentially, the most delicate and explosive aspect of the whole post-W.W. II settlement of Europe: the division of Germany.

There was also reason to believe that recent experience in the third world threatened to make any conflict that did break out more dangerous. In Central America, Africa, and most recently in South Asia, the Soviet Union and the United States had grown accustomed to violent confrontations, albeit through surrogates and allies. The fact that these conflicts were isolated geographically from other flash-points, as well as from the central zones of the great powers' strategic interests, imposed limits on their escalatory potential. If a confrontation were to emerge in Europe, however, even if initially it took place between the allies of the great powers rather than the powers themselves, such inherent limiting factors would not apply.

#### **SEQUENCE OF RELEVANT EVENTS, 1995-2000**

During the last five years of the century, the attention of both great powers was drawn to increasingly unstable conditions in several parts of Europe, and each experienced serious problems in relations with its ostensible allies in the region. Developments in both East and West Germany at the end of the decade threatened the interests of both great powers and led eventually to direct confrontation between them.

#### **German-American Problems and the Reorganization of NATO**

American hopes for an improvement in relations with Germany were dashed by the results of the German general elections of November 1995, which ensured that the German government would move even farther to the left. The SPD remained the largest single party, even though the CDU regained some of the ground which it had lost in the previous election. An alarming trend was the increasing polarization of the electorate and the growth of extremist parties. The centrist FDP disappeared as a political force, having lost the support of many of its moderate constituents as a result of its association with the increasingly radical policies of the SPD government. The radical Green Party, on the other

hand, prospered and established itself firmly as the third largest party. The SPD was forced to create a coalition with the Greens to remain in office. On the other extreme of the political spectrum, the election of 1995 saw the resurgence of the far right with the appearance of the ultra-nationalist "New German" Party. This party, which advocated the FRG's withdrawal from NATO, the development of a German nuclear force, and the immediate reunification of Germany--by force if necessary--won the support of only a small percentage of the electorate, but its very existence was viewed with apprehension by the major German parties, as well as by foreign governments; not the least troubled were Moscow and Washington.

Washington's more immediate concern, however, was for the policies of the German Left. The Green Party had campaigned on the theme of German withdrawal from NATO. When it became apparent that the Greens might enter into the government, this issue reached the forefront of German political debate. The Greens sought an immediate referendum on the question of NATO membership, but the SPD rejected this option. At the conclusion of private negotiations between the parties preceding the formation of the new government, it was announced that the Federal Republic would remain in NATO, but withdraw from the integrated military command, and that U.S. forces would be asked to accelerate and expand the scheduled withdrawal of troops from Germany. The goal of 150,000 troops withdrawn by the year 2000 and total pull-out by 2005 was put forward. Finally, the government returned to the call for an immediate withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from Germany. This program was officially presented to the North Atlantic Council in February 1996. At that time, the U.S. and British governments proposed that a full-scale summit meeting be held in the summer to deal with this issue.

In the meantime, the U.S. president's special envoy was dispatched to Bonn with the hope of securing a change in German policy. No such change was forthcoming, however. Social Democratic leaders made it clear in private discussions with the U.S. representative that the government's stated position already represented a compromise from the outright abandonment of NATO originally demanded by the Greens, and as such marked the limit of possible flexibility.

Bonn's intransigent position caused alarm not only in Washington, but also in other European capitals. Privately, French and British leaders in particular voiced their concerns over the long-term impact of a total U.S. pull-out from Germany. Yet, while both the French and the British, as well as a number of the smaller NATO countries were of the opinion that U.S. troops should remain in Europe, each of them hastened to emphasize that

it would be impossible politically to increase the size of the U.S. deployment in their own country (or, in the case of France, to accept U.S. troops at all) at this point in time. Such a move, European governments claimed, would result only in a political reaction which would in all likelihood drive them from office, to be replaced by less accommodating parties.

This controversy received extensive press coverage in the United States, and had a profound impact on American politics. The question became one of the central issues of the 1996 U.S. presidential election, with leaders of both political parties urging a fundamental reassessment of U.S. policy towards Germany and Europe as a whole. Despite these political pressures, the administration continued its efforts to bring about some sort of compromise in Europe.

Working in close cooperation with British leaders, the U.S. devised a plan which, it was hoped, would allow the immediate crisis to be overcome and give the political situation in Germany time to evolve. Rather than allow the Germans to withdraw unilaterally from the NATO integrated command, the existing command structure would be abandoned voluntarily and replaced with a looser framework of "coordinating committees." The pull-out of U.S. troops from Germany would proceed according to the schedule agreed to in 1993, with the understanding that the withdrawal would be continued beyond the original plan so that all U.S. troops would be out of Germany by the year 2010. There was considerable hope in London and Washington that the leftist German coalition would prove unstable, and that a more conservative government would take office in Bonn before too long. Accordingly, British and American planners sought to create a situation analogous to that which resulted from the Anglo-American nuclear weapons negotiations of 1988: A solution which was acceptable to the incumbent government, but timed in such a way as to be potentially reversible by a successor government should the political balance shift.

When the much-talked-of summit was finally held in September 1996, it appeared that such a solution might actually be reached. The heads of state of all of the NATO nations, meeting in Luxembourg, agreed to do away with NATO's integrated command structure and replace it with a consultative framework of the sort envisaged in the Anglo-American proposal. The issue of U.S. troops was more difficult to resolve, but in the end, the U.S. convinced the Germans to accept a gradual reduction in troop levels. In return, however, the U.S. agreed to accelerate the departure of nuclear weapons from Germany. It is possible that this compromise might have worked in the manner intended by its British

and American authors had it been given time. As it turned out, however, outside events and political shifts in the United States altered the situation completely in a brief period of time.

While the results of the September summit were acceptable to the U.S. administration, they created an unexpectedly strong political reaction in the United States. The president's opponents attacked the administration's position on two grounds. First, a powerful body of opinion held that in light of the uncooperative stance taken not only by Germany but--it was felt--by all of the Europeans in military and other matters, the United States should no longer incur the expense of defending Europe. Supporters of this position were divided on the question of preferable military alternatives--some promoting a shift in the U.S. military posture to emphasize East Asia and the third world, while others urged greater reliance on strategic forces, including space-based defenses--but the first step, withdrawal from Europe, was a point of growing consensus.

Second, a number of influential military leaders raised the objection that if the pull-out of U.S. troops proceeded according to the proposed schedule, U.S. forces remaining in Europe after the first few years would be increasingly vulnerable to attack. While most proponents of this position would have preferred to see the United States maintain a strong position in Europe, they believed that a weak military presence on the continent was more dangerous than none at all. In this way, several influential voices were added to the call for a prompt and total withdrawal from continental Europe.

The impact of this controversy was increased by the fact that it took place in a presidential election year. The incumbent party's commitment to the the maintenance of a U.S. presence in Europe, at least in the near future, proved to be a serious liability. The successful opposition candidate who took office in January 1987 made it clear that his administration would speed up, rather than resist, the withdrawal of troops from Germany, and had proposed during the campaign that the removal of all U.S. forces from Europe be considered as well as the outright dissolution of the Alliance.

The interests of the United States, he and his supporters claimed, were no longer served by maintaining a costly and unwelcome presence in Europe; American interests in Asia and the Western Hemisphere should take precedence. Accordingly, the new president proposed the most radical withdrawal schedule yet presented, eliminating the entire U.S. military presence in Europe, with the exception of forces in Great Britain and Turkey, by the end of the president's term in the year 2000.

The shift in American attitudes was greeted with considerable satisfaction in Moscow. The removal of U.S. forces from Europe had been a central goal of Soviet foreign policy since the 1950s. It was all the more welcome at this time because of developments in Eastern Europe which led the Soviet government to contemplate a number of actions which would have been considerably more dangerous had a strong U.S. commitment to European security been in place. These Soviet initiatives were motivated by increasing instability within the Warsaw Pact, which provided both opportunities and threats for the U.S.S.R.

### SOVIET INITIATIVES IN POLAND AND YUGOSLAVIA, 1996-97

One obvious trouble spot in 1996 was Yugoslavia. Opposition to the Serbian-dominated government had progressed to the point that violent protests were now taking place inside the country. These took the form of large public demonstrations and, more alarmingly, of the assassination of officials and the sabotage of governmental and military facilities. The heavy-handed tactics employed by the Yugoslav federal government in dealing with these problems resulted in widely publicized human rights abuses and brought considerable censure from both public and official sources in the West. As a result, Yugoslav leaders turned increasingly to the Soviet Union for support. For the first time in nearly fifty years, Soviet military advisors were present in Belgrade in the autumn of 1995.

This development, and the rise in the level of violence which followed in Yugoslavia, was viewed with considerable apprehension in London and Paris. Although the French and British governments were unable to agree on joint action, leaders of each nation spoke frequently of their concern over the worsening situation in Yugoslavia.

In the winter of 1996, the potential consequences of the Yugoslav situation were eclipsed by a much more spectacular series of events in Poland. In the early 1990s, Poland had enjoyed a period of economic recovery, due largely to the steady expansion of economic relations between Poland and Western Europe. In time, however, certain Polish leaders became convinced that Poland was prevented from exploiting its economic potential more fully by the restrictions imposed on it by the Soviet Union. Continued social peace in Poland depended critically on a steady improvement in economic well being, they argued. Accordingly, it was in the best interest of the Polish government and the ruling Communist Party, and perhaps essential to their survival, to seek more freedom-of-action from Moscow.

At the Congress of the Polish Communist Party held in Warsaw in December 1995, this faction was strong enough to force sharp changes in policy positions. In the months that followed, the Polish government put increasing distance between itself and the U.S.S.R. on domestic and international economic issues. A number of restrictions on the actions of Western firms in Poland were lifted and new systems of incentives for workers were debated. More seriously, a number of long-standing economic arrangements with the Soviet Union were terminated unilaterally and replaced with more lucrative contracts with Western countries and private companies.

The Soviet government, as expected, was extremely critical of these moves. It did not, however, take any action beyond sharply worded warnings from representatives of the Soviet government and party to colleagues in Warsaw. Certain elements in Poland took this Soviet passivity as a signal that more extensive changes might be possible. The Polish trade union movement, which had been thoroughly suppressed in the late 1980s, reemerged under a new generation of leaders, and the militancy of the Catholic clergy was once again more pronounced. The most troubling development, however, was growing evidence in the spring and summer of 1996 that the loyalty of the Polish Army--at least in the lower ranks--might be uncertain. While there was no question of spontaneous revolt, there was considerable doubt as to whether the Army would be of any use in quelling large popular protests, should they occur.

As a result of these fears, the government sought to avoid confrontation, an attitude which reinforced the belief among Polish radicals that sufficient pressure might bring far-reaching change, rather than a return to repression. Accordingly, church and labor organizers planned a series of popular demonstrations of increasing magnitude for the spring of 1997, to culminate with a massive May Day rally in Warsaw.

The first demonstrations, held in cities throughout Poland, were permitted by the authorities with the stipulation that no overtly political speeches or demands be made, a requirement which proved impossible to enforce. Subsequent rallies were banned, and led to clashes between demonstrators and authorities. The reaction of certain police and military units at this time seemed to bear out the government's worst fears. Numerous cases of open fraternization between protesters and law enforcement forces were reported. Tension mounted as May 1st neared. The Warsaw rally had been banned, but clearly would be attended by large numbers of people. The government began to fear that it might lose control of the situation entirely.

This fear was shared in Moscow, where developments in Poland were regarded with growing dismay. The Soviet ambassador in Warsaw informed the Polish government on the 28th of April that Moscow considered it essential that any unofficial May Day demonstrations be dispersed promptly and effectively, hinting that if Polish authorities were unable to accomplish this, they would be assisted in doing so. As an additional warning, Soviet troops in Poland were placed on alert and additional Soviet units began "exercises" on the Polish border.

On the appointed day, crowds estimated at over one million thronged the streets of the Polish capital, defying the government's ban. Initial attempts to disperse them were unsuccessful due to the sheer numbers involved. When the government ordered its troops to use greater force against the protesters, serious trouble began. Barricades sprang up and confrontations between police and demonstrators led to casualties on both sides. The worst fears of the government were borne out: Reports began arriving to the effect that significant numbers of police and army troops were going over to the protesters and turning their weapons against their former colleagues.

Soviet leaders soon concluded that the time had come to bring the situation back under control. Soviet troops were ordered into Warsaw to quell the "rebellion" by whatever means necessary. Heavily armed Soviet units moved into the city on May 2nd. The fighting which followed lasted most of the day but, in the end, Soviet forces were in total control of the city. The presence of deserting armed Polish troops among the protesters ensured that the operation would be costly to both sides. The Soviets suffered several hundred casualties, while deaths on the Polish side were rumored to be in the thousands.

The news of this spectacular confrontation spread quickly throughout Poland. Further clashes between protestors and Polish army troops were reported, but nowhere was there a repetition of the large-scale desertions which had taken place in Warsaw. Soviet troops were employed only to assist the Polish authorities, although they remained visible as a reminder to potential deserters, and maintained an advanced degree of alert. Within one week, the Soviets and their Polish allies had regained at least superficial control of the country.

Despite the relative ease of the initial operation, Soviet leaders were deeply disturbed that matters should have been allowed to progress so far. In the following weeks and months, a number of steps were taken to reassert Soviet authority over both the Polish

government and the population as a whole. The senior leaders of the Polish Communist Party resigned "voluntarily" on May 8th, to be replaced by previously unknown men whose chief qualification seemed to be loyalty to Moscow. Reports reaching the West in subsequent weeks spoke of large-scale reorganization of the Polish military. On the public level, Soviet troops remained visible in Polish cities but did not clash with the population. Polish forces, on the other hand, were ruthless in quelling all signs of public protest.

### **Western Reactions in Europe**

All Western governments were swift to condemn the violence employed by Polish and Soviet authorities in quelling the Warsaw demonstration. What actions they were actually prepared to take was considerably less clear. The United States took the opportunity to denounce yet another example of Soviet brutality and publicly regretted the fact that the lack of resolve of the West European nations made such Soviet behavior possible. The withdrawal of U.S. troops from Germany proceeded on schedule, however.

Reaction in European capitals was more complex. The Soviet action, and the public outrage which it generated in France and the U.K., convinced the French and British governments that a tougher position vis-a-vis the Soviets was necessary, and that only by cooperating with each other and other Western nations could such a policy be carried out.

Following a hastily convened summit conference on May 10th, the French President and the British Prime Minister issued a joint statement condemning Soviet actions in both Poland and Yugoslavia. The inclusion of the latter country was a critical point for, while the Polish crisis seemed to have been liquidated by the U.S.S.R., the situation in Yugoslavia offered an opportunity to organize effective resistance to the further spread of Soviet influence. Secretly, the two leaders agreed to begin coordinating foreign and military policy much more closely than in the past. French and British intelligence agencies began making contact with opposition forces inside Yugoslavia with a view to providing assistance in the struggle of those groups against pro-Soviet forces in their country.

In Bonn, the SPD/Green Party government realized that its foreign policy had suffered a considerable set-back. The FRG had been in the forefront of efforts to develop closer economic and political relations with Eastern Europe. SPD leaders had hoped that they could work in this way to diminish the influence of both great powers in Europe. It was now clear that this would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, given the attitude of the U.S.S.R.



On the popular level, anti-Soviet sentiment ran strongly throughout West Germany. This sentiment did not translate into a renewed enthusiasm for NATO or closer ties with United States, however; support for the continued withdrawal of U.S. troops from Germany remained strong. Instead, the prestige and support lost by the Socialists tended to benefit the neo-nationalist far right. Fifty years of American occupation, the New German Party argued, had not brought an end to the division of Germany or to the Russian domination of Eastern Europe. Quite the opposite, a tacit understanding between the great powers had perpetuated this state of affairs. Freedom from the control of the United States was thus a prerequisite for the return of a united Germany to its proper position in Europe.

### **U.S. Initiatives in Asia**

While the United States took no action in Europe in response to developments in Poland, U.S. foreign policy was not entirely unaffected by them. American decision-makers judged that with Soviet attention and resources drawn increasingly to Eastern Europe, it might be possible for the United States to diminish Soviet influence elsewhere in the world. Two regions in particular seemed to offer possibilities for successful anti-Soviet action.

The first was Southeast Asia, where the position of Vietnam, the Soviet Union's principal regional ally, was becoming increasingly precarious. The Vietnamese-backed regimes in Kampuchea and Laos were beset by armed insurgencies, while Vietnam itself faced a permanent threat from large Chinese forces on its northern border. Given the poor state of Vietnam's economy, only continual financial and military support from the Soviet Union made it possible for Hanoi to maintain its regional position. The U.S. government sought to make that support as costly to the Soviet Union as possible.

In pursuing this policy, the United States was aided by the considerable progress that had been made in Sino-American relations in the preceding years. With regard to Vietnam, Chinese and American policies and interests largely coincided. The supply of advanced American weapons to China, which had begun in the early 1990s, gained momentum after 1995. By the summer of 1997, China was in a position to challenge Vietnam directly, with the confidence that only a major military effort on the part of the Soviet Union--something which the Soviets were unlikely to consider given their preoccupation with Eastern Europe--could threaten China's security.

During the summer and fall of 1997, China launched a number of limited attacks along its border with Vietnam. Although these actions were not followed up by permanent

advances into Vietnamese territory, they were sufficiently serious--involving large armored forces supported by aircraft--to cause Vietnam to increase its troop levels along the border significantly. At the same time, China increased the level of its support for Laotian and Kampuchean insurgents who, given the reduced Vietnamese presence in the two countries, enjoyed considerable success.

U.S. participation in these actions was not limited to diplomatic and material support of China. U.S. naval forces, including at least two carrier battle groups, took up permanent stations in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Tonkin. While U.S. aircraft did not penetrate into Vietnamese airspace, they carried out surveillance and patrol missions over the maritime approaches to Vietnamese ports. The implication of this presence was well understood by the Vietnamese and their Soviet allies who, accordingly, were not slow to challenge it. Air clashes between U.S. F-14s and late model Soviet aircraft of the Vietnamese air force--some of which were believed to be flown by Soviet pilots--ensued, with casualties to both sides. Two U.S. aircraft were downed and their crews lost, while U.S. pilots reported shooting down seven or eight enemy planes in a six-week period in September and October, after which Vietnam, in an unannounced change of policy, stopped sending aircraft to challenge the U.S. forces over international waters. Chinese pressure on Vietnam's northern border eased somewhat after this point, although the number of troops deployed on both sides remained high. The tactical purpose of the Sino/American intervention had been accomplished; the Kampuchean rebels, now facing a significantly smaller Vietnamese force, had recovered the initiative in their struggle to rid themselves of Hanoi's domination.

The significance of these events in the larger context of Soviet-American relations was clear. The United States was prepared to compensate for its diminishing influence in Europe by taking advantage of Soviet weakness elsewhere in the world. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was reluctant to challenge the U.S. moves or allow its allies to do so. In the early months of 1998, the United States proceeded to make this point even more directly in South Asia.

U.S. relations with Pakistan had prospered since the U.S. intervention in that country in 1994. By the end of 1998, not only had the internal authority of the Islamabad government been consolidated, but it was possible for the United States to contemplate the use of Pakistan as a base for offensive actions against Soviet interests in Afghanistan.

The Soviet Union had largely suppressed armed internal opposition in Afghanistan in the early 1990s. Among the huge Afghan refugee population still residing in Pakistan, however, numerous individuals could be found who would be willing to resume the struggle against the U.S.S.R. and the Kabul regime if weapons and other support were provided. The United States and Pakistan proceeded to train a new generation of Afghan insurgents and to arm them with sophisticated U.S. weapons. Combat operations against Soviet and Afghan government forces in Afghanistan began to take a mounting toll in personnel and equipment. In order to ensure that this action did not bring a renewal of Soviet pressure on Pakistan, the United States deployed several squadrons of tactical aircraft near Islamabad, emphasizing its commitment to the defense of Pakistan.

While it did not result in any direct U.S./Soviet clashes, the U.S./Pakistani initiative in Afghanistan was without doubt a greater threat to the Soviet Union than the Sino/American actions in Southeast Asia. Not only was the scene of hostilities directly adjacent to Soviet territory, but the local anti-Soviet insurgent forces were potentially powerful while the U.S.S.R.'s local ally was extremely weak. As a result, the Soviet troop presence in Afghanistan, which been reduced considerably in the mid-1990s was once again increased to four full divisions.

### **Crisis in the Two Germanies**

While the United States was keeping up pressure on the Soviet Union in Asia, Soviet leaders themselves were still occupied primarily with problems in Europe. The intervention in Poland was followed by an intense and prolonged debate in the highest circles of the Soviet leadership. At issue was an analysis of the causes and consequences of the Polish uprising, and the steps to be taken to prevent its recurrence either in Poland or elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The first important conclusion reached in Moscow was that the relative leniency of the Polish government in the early stages of the situation was directly responsible for the eventual seriousness of the revolt. More importantly, it seemed clear that the rapidly increasing level of contact with the West, which had preceded the Polish troubles, was ultimately at their root.

Having reached these conclusions, Soviet leaders took stock of the situation elsewhere in Eastern Europe with a view of heading off future problems by taking prompt action to correct their cause. In light of the "lessons" of Poland, the state of affairs in East Germany was clearly troubling. Relations with Western Europe had indeed progressed farther in the DDR than in any other East European state, including Poland. The "special

relationship" between the two Germanies was in part responsible for this. Another important factor, though, was East Germany's more advanced economy, which had become dependent on Western markets and was in ever greater need of Western technology and investment. The Soviet government concluded that in allowing East Berlin to pursue economic and even political ties with Bonn on an official level, a potentially serious tactical error had been committed. Further, it was held to be impossible that the current East German regime, committed as it was to its "opening to the West" would willingly agree to alter its policy. A change of leadership was needed in the DDR.

In carrying out what would amount to a coup d'etat in East Berlin, Soviet leaders knew that they could count on the total cooperation of the East German Army, whose pro-Soviet sentiments, at least in the higher ranks, had been cultivated carefully. With the aid of the East German military intelligence service, Soviet agents in East Berlin "discovered" that a close aide to the General-Secretary of the East German Communist Party was in fact a West German spy. There followed a prompt and public trial, during which a confession was duly produced and the individual convicted. After such an event, the implicated party leader could do little but resign, whereupon pro-Soviet elements in the East German Party demanded an extraordinary Congress for the purpose of choosing, not only a new leader, but an entire new leadership group.

East Germany was placed effectively under military government, with the few civilians in high party and government positions drawn largely from the ranks of the security forces and known for their loyalty to Moscow. The new government announced a policy of "Socialist renewal." In practice, this meant a break with the West, and most especially with the government in Bonn, and a return to the closest possible relationship with the U.S.S.R.

Economic ties with the FRG and other European countries, some of which had existed since the 1970s, were curtailed sharply, beginning with those which involved the direct interaction of East German and foreign workers. In a parallel development, the various social measures which had been taken to facilitate human contact and movements between the two Germanies were eliminated almost entirely, while solidarity with other Socialist nations was put forth as the first principle of East Germany's foreign policy.

As might be expected, this abrupt change of direction in government policy was not well received by the East German population. Social and cultural relations with West Germany had come to be accepted as a natural right, and their sudden disappearance was

resented greatly. More serious in the long run was the fact that East Germany's economy had become dependent on relations with the West. The cutting off of those relations would inevitably lead to a notable deterioration in the general standard of living.

In fact, the first important repercussions of the Berlin Coup were felt not in the East, but in Bonn. The popular standing of Germany's left-wing government, which had suffered a major blow following the Soviet intervention in Poland, was utterly destroyed by this latest development. The policy of a peaceful opening to the East was judged a total failure by a majority of the West German electorate, and even by a significant portion of the SPD leadership. The West German Chancellor resigned on September 1st, triggering parliamentary elections to be held six weeks later.

The principal characteristic of the electoral campaign which followed was the swing to the right of the German electorate. It became clear that the SPD would be severely weakened and that the Greens might well disappear altogether. Mirroring this phenomenon was the spectacular rise of the far-right New German Party (NDP), whose call for an end of all peaceful contact with the puppet government in East Berlin and the prompt reunification of Germany found unprecedented support. The more moderate CDU was pushed to the right by the force of events, returning to the positions which it had held in the 1950s. German reunification was once again to be the government's principal goal. Perhaps the most important position taken by the CDU was that it would be willing, if necessary, to form a coalition with the NDP to create a new government.

Following the election of October 15, 1997, in which the NDP received fully one fourth of the votes cast, such a coalition came into existence. One of the first acts of the new government was to confirm that the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Germany, which was underway but not yet complete, would not be ended, but indeed accelerated. June 1, 1998, was given as the deadline for the final removal of all American military personnel from Germany. Further, the government announced that, effective immediately, German troops would be withdrawn from all NATO decision-making arrangements, and would no longer coordinate their activities with those of the other allies. Germany refrained from repudiating the NATO treaty outright, although many in the NDP would have wished this, but it was clear that its existence, as it related to Germany, had become purely theoretical.

Indeed, the anti-American sentiments of the new governments were scarcely less important than its anti-Soviet feelings. Further, these sentiments extended to France and Great Britain. The four powers were seen to be equally responsible for perpetuating the

division of Germany and, as such, were equally to blame for it. In accordance with this principle, it was announced that French and British troops would be required to leave Germany along with those of the United States.

### **RISING TENSION IN EUROPE, 1998-99**

The abrupt changes of government in the two Germanies hastened the renewed process of West European integration which had begun after the Polish crisis. The Anglo-French "entente" was broadened to include Italy, which was worried about the steady gains in Soviet influence in Yugoslavia, and the smaller NATO countries of northern Europe, all of which were alarmed at the radical shift in German policy. A number of concrete steps were taken. The British forces which had formerly been stationed in Germany were redeployed to Belgium and Holland, and symbolic Anglo-French contingents were sent to Denmark and Norway.

The first true test of the renewed Western alliance came in the late summer of 1997, when the situation inside Yugoslavia suddenly became more pressing. For several months, intelligence reports from Yugoslavia had been indicating that organized insurgent groups were operating in the mountains of Slovenia and in the remote regions of the Dalmatian coast. On August 20th, a clandestine radio station in northern Slovenia announced the creation of the Yugoslav Independence Front. Denouncing the Belgrade government as a Soviet puppet, as well as a tyrannical instrument of Serbian domination, the YIF sought to rid all Yugoslavia of Soviet influence and to restore the country to federalism and international neutrality, the legacy of Marshal Tito. All patriotic Yugoslavs, of whatever ethnic nationality, the YIF claimed, would be welcome in its ranks.

Reaction to this announcement was swift, both in Paris and London, and in Moscow and Belgrade. The Soviet and Yugoslav governments denounced the "so-called Yugoslav Independence Front" and announced that the group's leaders and those participating in the clandestine radio broadcast had been captured and imprisoned--an assertion which Western intelligence agencies discounted. West European governments, on the other hand, repeated their previous call for the return of Yugoslavia to its former neutral status and denounced the brutal methods of the Belgrade regime.

In addition to public statements, both sides prepared to take action. The Soviet presence in Yugoslavia was increased considerably, including for the first time not only advisors and instructors, but security and special forces troops to be used in the field. The supply of advanced Soviet weapons to Belgrade also increased significantly. The Western

nations, for their part, were divided. Italy and the smaller states were hesitant to take any action which might lead to a yet larger Soviet presence in Yugoslavia. France and Britain, however, resolved to hinder the Soviet attempt to reduce Yugoslavia to the status of a satellite. In the spring of 1998, thus, the intelligence services of France and England began to provide covert assistance to the YIF insurgents.

A point on which all of the West Europeans--except the FRG--agreed was the need to repair relations with the United States. As the situation in Europe deteriorated, the absence of a solid American commitment to European security became increasingly worrisome. The British government, in particular, was anxious to renew the close ties with Washington which had once been central to British foreign policy, and British leaders were in a relatively good position to accomplish this. Since the fall of the Labour government in 1992, Anglo-American relations had been improving steadily. It was now proposed that U.S. forces in the U.K. be increased as they were withdrawn from Germany and, in a remarkable reversal of policy, British leaders suggested privately that it might be possible to reintroduce U.S. nuclear weapons into Britain. This statement, more than any other, symbolized the distance which had been traveled by British public and official opinion in the six years since 1992. Perhaps the most significant step taken at the summit, though, was the decision to keep U.S. war reserve stocks and pre-positioned equipment, which was slated to be withdrawn from Germany, in Europe. It was agreed that equipment for two divisions would be stockpiled in France, while sets for one each would be located in Belgium and Holland.

These suggestions were received with considerable skepticism in Washington, given the record of U.S.-European relations in preceding years and the administration's stated position on European issues, but the president agreed to attend a summit of Western leaders to be held in London on the 1st of March, 1998. At this event, attended by the leaders of all NATO members except Germany, more surprises were in store for the Americans. It was proposed that the remaining U.S. troops in Germany, consisting of two tactical air wings and two armored divisions, be kept in Europe. The ground forces would be sent to Italy and the low countries, while air units would be deployed in Britain and Norway. Further, the French president informed the U.S. president that if the United States were willing to send additional air units to Europe, it would be possible for them to be based in France.

Despite the administration's prior commitment to disengagement in Europe, the president was impressed by the European's evident deep concern, and American reactions

were generally positive; a mood of crisis seized the country. Developments in Poland, Yugoslavia, and the two Germanies had led to considerable alarm in Washington, which the success of U.S. initiatives in the third world had been insufficient to placate. The revival of the alliance in Europe was welcomed by many who had been predicting the imminent demise of NATO only two years earlier. The troop deployments suggested at the London conference were endorsed by American military and congressional leaders and executed over the following months.

By August 1998, U.S. tactical air wings were located in Belgium, Holland, and Norway, and three additional wings were slated to take up positions in eastern France following the preparation of facilities in the fall of that year. Two armored brigades had been redeployed from Germany to Belgium and one to Holland, while a full division went to northern Italy. In a parallel development, additional U.S. air units were moved to Turkey, where an American presence had been maintained without interruption since 1992.

At the same time, the situation in Germany was growing increasingly tense. As the full economic and social significance of the Soviet-enforced break with the West became apparent to the people of East Germany in the spring and summer of 1998, opposition to the government mounted. For the first time since the 1950s, open street demonstrations were held in East German cities. Unlike the situation in Poland two years previously, however, there was no question of divided loyalties on the part of the military or security forces. All popular protests were quelled ruthlessly by German police or Army troops.

The government in Berlin blamed the troubles on foreign agitators. In fact, this claim was not entirely inaccurate. The West German government, true to its policy of working for the reunification of Germany by the most expedient means available, was taking an active interest in the growing dissatisfaction of the East German population. West German radio and television gave extensive and frequently exaggerated coverage to the disturbances across the intra-German border and were listened to avidly throughout the DDR. NDP members of the Bundestag demanded that the government take immediate steps to assist fellow Germans suffering from Soviet tyranny. On a more practical level, it was widely suspected that West German agents were indeed active in the East, and at least partially responsible for the violence there. They were suspected in particular of inspiring or even carrying out a wave of bombings against East German government targets, which had begun in the winter of 1999.



The Soviet and East German governments, in addition to nearly constant public attacks on the "neo-fascist" government in Bonn, began a steady increase in the number and readiness of troops in East Germany. In March 1999, U.S. reconnaissance satellites detected troop movements from the Western Soviet Union to East Germany. Intelligence analysts concluded that the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany was being increased from 19 to 22 or possibly 23 divisions, and that additional air units were also being brought forward. The East German Army, for its part, deployed increasing numbers of troops on the intra-German border and around West Berlin.

The isolated former German capital, ironically, contained the last Western troops on German soil. Although the Bonn government had called for the removal of foreign troops from Berlin at the same time as from the rest of the country, it had no means to enforce this as the city remained under Four Power Administration. The Berlin authorities, for their part, were hostile to the new government which had caused the city's formerly profitable contacts with the East to be nearly all cut off, and encouraged the allies to remain.

The Soviet and East German troop movements were noted in Bonn as well as in Washington. In response, the West German government began to increase its own military strength. The period of military service was prolonged and a partial mobilization of reserves started. More ominously, information reaching Western intelligence sources suggested that the German government had launched a crash program to produce nuclear weapons. It is reasonable to conclude that Soviet sources were receiving similar information. As a result of this military posturing on both sides of the intra-German border, war in Europe, a chiefly theoretical subject since the 1961-62 Berlin crisis, began to appear as a real possibility as the summer of 1999 turned to autumn.

#### **WAR IN GERMANY, MARCH 2000**

Popular protests in East Germany increased both in number and level of violence in the last months of 1999. Economic hardships were still responsible for much of the genuine popular discontent, but the repressive actions of the authorities stirred up further hatred, a feeling which the West German media and Bonn's agents did their utmost to encourage.

On New Year's Day of the year 2000, a powerful bomb was detonated inside a Soviet military compound near Leipzig, claiming the lives of more than 100 Soviet soldiers. In reprisal, East German authorities began mass arrests of suspected "enemies of the state." Significantly, they were assisted for the first time by Soviet security forces, and

certain opposition leaders were reported to have been taken directly to the Soviet Union upon their capture.

While these actions of the Soviets and East Germans served further to increase popular protests, West German agents began a large-scale campaign to smuggle weapons into East Germany, with the result that confrontations between protesters and security forces became increasingly deadly. By February, armored personnel carriers of both the German and Soviet armies were a common sight on the streets of East German cities.

A spectacular event suddenly escalated the German domestic crisis into an international confrontation. On the 1st of March, in what was obviously a well planned move, an entire East German tank battalion in the vicinity of the town of Magdeburg mutinied. The rebel officers and soldiers attacked Soviet forces in the vicinity, and then headed for the West German border, less than twenty miles distant. When the border was reached, it became apparent that the defenses in the sector in question had been sabotaged; the rebel troops succeeded in making their escape to the West. At the same time, radio broadcasts were made from both sides of the intra-German border announcing the mutiny and calling on the rest of the East German army to follow.

The result, as anticipated, was a period of utter confusion. Initially, most of the East German armed forces ignored the calls to rebel. Soviet commanders, however, reacted hastily and ordered all German forces to disperse and turn over their heavy weapons to Soviet forces. Discipline and loyalty to the Soviet Union remained strong in the East German officer corp, but among the lower ranks, news of the successful escape of the rebel battalion spread quickly and inspired a number of efforts to emulate it by small units or ad hoc groups of soldiers. These scattered and disorganized rebels had no chance of resisting the Soviet forces which immediately attacked them, but their efforts led to highly visible confrontations, which in turn led to further uprisings by soldiers and clandestinely armed civilians. By the 3rd of March, fighting was taking place throughout East Germany.

One result of the violence was the creation of a flow of refugees headed west. This was aided by the West German government, which broadcast both encouragement to the rebels and promises of asylum for all who arrived in its territory. Further, West German forces along the border were ordered to assist refugees in crossing to the West. As Soviet troops on the other side sought to turn the refugees back, several confrontations occurred. On March 4th, West German and Soviet units exchanged artillery and rocket fire along the

border. By the 6th, an increasing number of East German troops had joined the rebellion--in many cases as a result of being attacked by Soviet forces, which now had orders to disarm all German troops. Full-scale battles, including tanks and aircraft from both sides, took place at several border crossings which West German troops sought to keep open.

By this time, the Western powers had also become involved due to the efforts of East German refugees to seek shelter in West Berlin. The city's three-nation garrison, knowing itself to be isolated, initially attempted to turn the refugees back, but in the end were unable to stop them. Western governments, meanwhile, called for a general cease-fire throughout Germany. At the same time, however, all West European and U.S. military forces were placed at their highest alert levels. The mobilization of reserves, which was already underway in Europe and the United States was accelerated, and the four U.S. pre-positioned divisions began preparations for immediate transfer to Europe; several air wings had already begun to move. U.S. naval forces, including four aircraft carriers in the north Atlantic and large numbers of submarines were ordered to proceed to forward positions.

On March 8th, Soviet commanders in East Germany informed their superiors in Moscow that in order to bring the situation in East Germany under control it would be necessary to carry out large-scale attacks on the West German troops massing near the border. At the same time, analysts in Moscow concluded that the no long-term solution could be found to the problems in East Germany so long as the current Bonn regime remained in power. Further, any delay in dealing with Bonn increased the risks, as the possibility of West German production of nuclear weapons in the near future was taken seriously in Moscow. The conclusion which followed from this reasoning was inescapable. West Germany must be attacked, not only to relieve the immediate pressure on the intra-German border, but also to overthrow the Bonn government.

The only remaining question was whether operations could safely be confined to Germany. Had the general state of relations between the Soviet Union and the West been different, this might have been possible. The West German government was clearly as unpalatable to the West as it was to the East. In the view of Soviet analysts and decision-makers, however, the present situation did not allow such optimistic assumptions.

The recent behavior of the United States in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia, and of the French and British in Yugoslavia, constituted a clear pattern of aggressive Western opportunism. In such a climate, it would be imprudent to believe that a major commitment

of Soviet forces, such as would be necessary to overthrow the substantial military power of the West German regime, would not elicit a Western response of equal or greater magnitude in a zone of potential Soviet vulnerability. While NATO's ground forces in the European continent had been reduced substantially, Western air power in Great Britain and the continent was growing rapidly and could make Soviet operations in Germany extremely costly. In a longer conflict, the U.S. pre-positioned materiel in France, Holland, and Belgium would make it possible for a substantial number of U.S. ground forces to be deployed to Europe without the risk and delay involved in a major sea-lift operation. There was also the risk, of course, that the West, recognizing its conventional inadequacy, might quickly initiate the use of air-delivered nuclear munitions.

Outside the principal Central European theater, other U.S. moves also concerned Soviet military planners. The reinforcement of U.S. air units in Turkey and Pakistan provided one threat, while the increasing degree of Sino-American cooperation was a potential threat not only to Soviet allies, but to Siberia and the Soviet Far East. The most immediate threat, however, was posed by the movement of American naval forces in the North Atlantic, which suggested that a strike against the Soviet northern fleet and its bases near Murmansk might be imminent.

Defense against any of these attacks, if the Soviet Union were to wait until they were launched, would be costly and difficult. On the other hand, timely preemption could eliminate much of the threat posed by U.S. and NATO sea and air forces. Accordingly, Soviet military planners concluded that the only realistic option open to them was to attack as much of NATO's long-range striking power as possible at the same time as Soviet ground and tactical air units invaded West Germany. The large quantity of long-range aircraft and medium-range ballistic missiles available to Soviet forces made a preemptive strike feasible without the use of nuclear weapons and without drawing down the ground forces and tactical aircraft needed for operations in Germany. By refraining from the use of nuclear weapons and attacks on U.S. territory, Soviet planners believed that they could avoid the initiation of a strategic exchange; they calculated that the U.S. would accept the loss of its still relatively small forces in Europe rather than risk the total destruction of its society.

On the 10th of March, the plan was executed. While Soviet armored forces were crossing the intra-German border, air and missile attacks were launched on NATO air bases in France, Great Britain and the low countries, as well as Turkey and northern Norway; chemical weapons, as well as conventional munitions were used in these strikes. At the

same time, Soviet submarines and long-range aircraft began intensive attacks against U.S. aircraft carriers and submarines in the North Atlantic, destroying two carriers and a number of escorts within 24 hours.

Faced with such an attack, the U.S. and NATO forces actually engaged had little choice but to fight. Beyond this, it soon became clear that the Soviet assumption that the United States would not pursue or escalate the conflict was incorrect. The American president concluded that to sue for peace would seal the fate of the Western World for generations, and probably lead to the eventual destruction of American democratic society. The one chance, he concluded, was to demonstrate U.S. resolve and continued military prowess, while still holding hostage the Soviet population and leadership.

The composition of available U.S. forces dictated short-term tactics. Surviving air units in Europe struck military targets--primarily airfields--in Eastern Europe with nuclear weapons, while long-range nuclear-armed cruise missiles from U.S. strategic aircraft and naval ships attacked the main Soviet naval bases of Murmansk and Vladivostok and associated airfields. At the same time, the U.S. fleet was ordered to engage all Soviet naval units throughout the world. The purpose of these attacks on naval forces and bases was partially a retaliation for the destruction of the U.S. carriers. More importantly, it was the start of a more general U.S. campaign to achieve domination over critical air and sea lanes. In a parallel development, U.S. and British naval forces began an intensive anti-submarine campaign in the North Atlantic and the Pacific.

The U.S. and its European allies also made it clear that they would not permit Germany to be overrun by Soviet forces. Preparations were accelerated for the transfer of the four U.S. divisions with pre-positioned equipment in France and the low countries as well as additional industrial and military mobilization. In the meantime, the three U.S. brigades stationed in the low countries, along with the French Rapid Action Force, advanced into the German Rhineland and reoccupied a number of critical NATO air bases and other military facilities meeting only sporadic opposition from advanced elements of the invading Soviet forces in the process.

The West Germans, for their part, offered fierce resistance to the Soviet invaders and, although greatly outnumbered, managed to hold a number of positions around the urban areas of North Germany, and in the more difficult rural terrain of the South. Although little in the way of reliable intelligence was available in the West, it seemed that the situation in East Germany was continuing to deteriorate, as rebellion spread among the

population and armed forces. There were also reports of new uprisings in Poland. By March 13th, three days after the initial Soviet attack, it was clear that Soviet hopes of a quick campaign were in vain. A major conflict was underway in Europe and its issue was far from certain.

### **THE DISPOSITION OF FORCES IN MARCH 2000**

While U.S. force levels in Europe had fallen to exceptionally low levels in the mid- and late-1990s, they had begun to grow rapidly once again in the year immediately preceding the outbreak of conflict. In March 2000, one U.S. armored division was in northern Italy, while a second, originally stationed in the low countries, had taken up positions in western Germany. Pre-positioned equipment for four additional divisions was stockpiled in Europe--two in France and one each in Belgium and Holland--the manpower for these units could be in place within the week. Although the pre-positioned stockpiles had been targeted in the initial Soviet strike, sufficient equipment survived to equip the initial U.S. deployment. Material for reinforcements and for additional divisions, if needed, would have to be brought from the United States. Finally, preparations were underway to deploy Marine forces to north Norway, where pre-positioned equipment also was stockpiled.

Before the Soviet attack, U.S. air forces in Europe had consisted of three tactical wings (plus one tactical reconnaissance and one transport wing) in Great Britain, three tactical wings in France, and one each in Italy, Belgium, Holland, and Norway; three additional wings were located in Turkey. The initial Soviet attack had caused extensive losses of men and equipment, but NATO military commanders estimated that their air units were at between 50 and 60 percent of their initial strength when the order to launch retaliatory strikes was issued on the 11th.

Outside of Europe, U.S. forces were stationed as usual in Japan, Okinawa, and Korea; there were no plans to move these forces. The only exceptional deployment of U.S. forces at this time was the presence of five tactical air squadrons and a small number of U.S. military advisors in Pakistan.

U.S. naval forces in the North Atlantic had taken serious losses in the initial Soviet strike. Of the four carriers in the northern task force, two had been sunk outright and another was disabled. A number of escorts were also lost or crippled, but attrition rate among U.S. submarines was believed to be much less serious. At this time, the U.S. Navy included 15 operational carrier battle groups and four surface action groups, centered

around the recommissioned battleships. Thirteen carriers were available for active duty on May 10; the other two were refitting in U.S. ports and would not be ready for some weeks. On May 11, three carriers, and their associated escorts were dispatched from U.S. Atlantic ports to join the embattled North Atlantic task force. Two surface action groups, at that time deployed in the western Atlantic, also proceeded northward to add their air defense potential to that of the task force.

The remaining naval deployments covered other active and potential crisis points. Two carrier groups had been kept on station in the Arabian Sea and two in the South China Sea since 1998 in conjunction with U.S. initiatives in Pakistan and Southeast Asia. One carrier and one surface action group were present in the eastern Mediterranean, and a similar task force was in the northwestern Pacific.

Full mobilization was underway both in the U.S. and in Europe. Its relatively late initiation, however, ensured that the U.S.S.R. had a three- to four-week lead in its mobilization schedule. By March 13th, Western intelligence estimates put the number of Soviet troops in Germany at 25 fully operational divisions. This lead was partially offset by the NATO retaliatory strikes of March 11th and 12th, but NATO analysts had not yet been able to assess the extent of damage to Soviet forces.

A second key factor detracting from the effectiveness of Soviet forces was the largely unknown, but likely chaotic situation in East Germany, and potentially in Poland and other East European countries. It was not clear, on March 13th, to what extent the U.S.S.R. would be able to make use of Soviet troops stationed in Eastern Europe--let alone East European troops--in offensive operations.

U.S. analysts believed that most of the surface combatants in the Soviet navy had been destroyed in the U.S. attacks on Murmansk and Vladivostok or in the American naval offensive which followed. Losses among submarines were harder to assess, but were believed to be less severe, although still significant. In the days following May 12th, American and NATO SSNs continued to seek out and engage all Soviet submarines, including SSBNs.

## **VII. SCENARIO DELTA: CONFLICTS IN ASIA LEAD TO U.S./SOVIET WAR IN THE YEAR 2000**

In this scenario we examine the possibilities of U.S./Soviet conflict arising from major changes in the policies and international alignments of the major regional powers of East Asia. The scenario postulates that Japan chooses to break its security relationship with the United States in the mid-1990s, and develops advanced military capabilities--including nuclear weapons. At the same time, according to this scenario, a change of government in the People's Republic of China causes Beijing to move toward closer ties with the Soviet Union.

After an initial period of success in its international initiatives in the last years of the 1980s, of which the most visible was the installation of a moderate government in Nicaragua, the United States encountered a series of difficulties in the period 1991 through 1996. An attempt to act jointly with the People's Republic of China to put pressure on Soviet allies in Southeast Asia ended in an embarrassing defeat for the U.S. when Soviet threats to retaliate directly against the U.S. and China led the American administration to abandon the initiative, rather than to commit itself to defend China in case of a major Soviet attack. This humiliating reversal strongly influenced U.S. domestic politics, leading to the election of a new president who was extremely cautious about the use of military power abroad. It also impacted strongly on Sino-American relations, contributing to a decline in the authority of those Chinese leaders who had favored close ties with the U.S.

In the years 1992-96, the U.S. took a relatively passive role in world affairs, concentrating instead on domestic problems. The principal international developments of this period included a series of conflicts in South and Southwest Asia--a brief but bloody Indo-Pakistani war in 1993, subsequent internal conflicts in Pakistan, leading to the growth of separatist pressures in Baluchistan, and serious internal divisions and conflicts in Iran following the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini. The latter weakened the Tehran government to the point that a pro-Soviet Kurdish faction was able to take control of northwestern Iran and proclaim an independent Kurdish state.



The year 1996 also saw two critical developments in the Far East as new leaders rose to power in Japan and Taiwan. Anti-American nationalist forces in Japan, which had been increasing their power base for some years, succeeded in bringing about a radical shift in Japanese policy, breaking security ties with the United States and initiating a major build-up of Japan's military forces. In Taiwan, by contrast, the rise of forces dedicated to the independence of Taiwan as a country separate from China, served to strengthen that country's ties to the U.S.

In the years following 1996, a more aggressive U.S. administration sought to reverse what it saw as an alarming trend towards growing Soviet influence in the Far East and Southwest Asia. In addition to supporting Taiwan against sharp threats from Beijing, the U.S. took a more active part in opposing Soviet-backed separatist movements in Baluchistan and Kurdistan. This increased U.S. role, as well as the participation of such U.S. allies as Saudi Arabia and Turkey, weakened pro-Soviet forces in Southwest Asia to the extent of threatening their continued existence as viable military forces.

As its position deteriorated in Southwest Asia, the Soviet Union sought to exploit the new strategic environment in the Far East to force the U.S. to reduce its military pressure in Iran and Pakistan. This policy led eventually to a Soviet-sponsored attack by Chinese and North Korean forces on South Korea. The U.S. refused to play the Soviet game, however, choosing instead to expand its operations against pro-Soviet forces in Iran and Pakistan while employing nuclear weapons against North Korea and China to avoid a long-term commitment of conventional forces to the Far East. At this point, the Soviet Union became convinced that the U.S. actions in Southwest Asia constituted a serious and growing threat to its fundamental security interests, and thus decided to respond in kind both in the Far East and in Southwest Asia. Nuclear strikes were launched on U.S. forces in South Korea, while Chinese forces initiated attacks on U.S. naval forces in the Far East. In this way, the two great powers found themselves prosecuting simultaneous major conflicts in Southwest Asia and the Far East, as well as a general naval war--a situation which neither power had sought.

The principal events leading to the confrontation in the year 2000 are set out in the chronology below.

#### CHRONOLOGY

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 1987-90 | U.S.-backed "Contras" increasingly successful.                           |
| 1989    | U.S. places embargo on the supply of "war-making" material to Nicaragua. |
|         | Death of the Ayatollah Khomeini.   |

- 1990 Power sharing agreement in Nicaragua.  
Secret U.S./Chinese negotiations plan cooperative action in Southeast Asia.  
Iran/Iraq war ends without formal agreement; increasing instability in Iran.
- 1991 U.S./China-backed rebel offensive in Kampuchea.  
Soviet control of Afghanistan consolidated.  
Pakistani President Zia forced to resign; Islamic fundamentalists control Pakistani government, renew efforts to develop nuclear weapons.  
Struggle for power among Islamic clerical and military factions in Iran; resurgence of Kurdish insurgency.  
Soviets react to events in Southeast Asia by putting pressure on China's northern border.
- 1992 China requests deployment of U.S. air units to Manchuria; planned deployment cancelled following Soviet threats against the U.S.; U.S./China relations begin to deteriorate.  
U.S. election: new administration committed to reducing foreign military interventions  
U.S.-Japanese relations deteriorate; rise of radical nationalists in Japan.
- 1993 Indo/Pakistani war, Pakistan defeated; Pakistani government and military authority seriously weakened.  
Increased Soviet support for Kurdish insurgents.
- 1994 Iranian Kurds proclaim the independent Democratic Republic of Kurdistan (DRK).
- 1995 Decisive defeat of Iranian force in Kurdistan.  
Growing separatist insurgency in Baluchistan.
- 1996
- March Japanese election leads to government dominated by extreme nationalists; Japan breaks ties with U.S., increases military potential, moves to develop nuclear weapons.
- Summer New constitution proclaimed in Taiwan; de facto unilateral declaration of independence.
- November U.S. elections bring new administration to power; U.S. moves to more active foreign policy stance.  
Official U.S. support for new Taiwanese regime.
- 1997
- March Sino/Soviet alliance renewed.
- Spring India, alarmed by situation in Baluchistan, seeks rapprochement with U.S.
- Summer Kurdisn uprisings in Turkey; increase in U.S. military aid to Turkey.
- Fall Soviet support for Baluchi rebels confirmed by U.S.
- November Increased U.S. naval deployments to Arabian Sea
- 1998
- February Baluchi rebels declare an independent Popular Republic of Baluchistan (PRB).
- March Saudi advisors in Pakistan.
- Mar/Apr Saudi and Egyptian special forces in Pakistan.
- September China begins provoking air incidents over Taiwan.
- Fall China increases aid to insurgent groups in the Philippines.
- November Chinese aircraft attack Taiwan-bound merchant ships.

<b>November</b>	U.S., Saudi Arabia, Oman, and India pledge to cooperate in opposing the establishment of pro-Soviet state on the Indian Ocean.
<b>December</b>	U.S. aircraft deployed to Taiwan, clash with Chinese.

#### 1999

<b>March</b>	Major Turkish offensive against Kurdish rebels in Turkey.
<b>April</b>	Turkish aircraft attack positions inside DRK, clash with Soviet and Iraqi forces.
<b>May</b>	U.S. air units deployed to Turkey.
<b>July</b>	Secret Turkish/Iranian agreement pledges cooperation against DRK.
<b>July</b>	Soviet ground forces deployed to DRK; Soviet build-up in the Transcaucasus district.
<b>July</b>	U.S. announces it will deploy ground forces to Turkey.
<b>Fall</b>	Pakistani units attack Baluchi facilities inside Afghanistan.
<b>December</b>	U.S. forces in Turkey reach two division-equivalents and three tactical wings.

#### 2000

<b>March</b>	Iranian forces make large gains against Kurds, threaten Tabriz.
<b>April</b>	U.S. special forces active in Kurdistan.
<b>May 4</b>	Soviet-backed North Korean attack on South Korea.
<b>May 7</b>	U.S. calls for cease-fire in Korea, warns it will attack aggressors directly.
<b>May 8</b>	Turkish offensive in Kurdistan; U.S. air strikes in Kurdistan and Afghanistan.
<b>May 9</b>	U.S. nuclear strike against North Korean and Chinese military targets; China begins intensive attacks on U.S. naval forces in the Far East.
<b>May 10</b>	Soviet nuclear strike against U.S. and South Korean positions in Korea; Soviet submarines join in operations against the U.S. Navy; Soviet air strikes on U.S. air bases in Turkey.
<b>May 11</b>	U.S. fleet engages Soviet naval forces--U.S. air strikes on Soviet air bases in the Transcaucasus.

### BACKGROUND, 1987-1995

While the war which broke out in Korea in the year 2000 was made possible in large part by the major changes which took place in the Far East after 1995, the war's roots, and in particular the motives of the great powers, reached back much farther in time - to the late 1980s--and included events as far away as the Persian Gulf. In this first section, we examine the international background of the events which were to lead to crises in the Gulf and the Far East in the late 1990s. In the succeeding section, we analyze in more detail the critical events of 1995-2000 which led to the war.

#### The Evolution of U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. foreign policy in the period 1987-1995 was, to a large extent, a reflection of domestic political trends in the United States. Conversely, the perceived foreign policy successes and failures of the several administrations in office during this period had a

substantial impact on their political fortunes. In general, it is accurate to state that U.S. foreign policy tended to be activist before 1993 and after 1996, and extremely cautious, almost isolationist, in the intervening period. The inconsistency of U.S. policy, and the confused expectations that it created among America's friends and enemies was responsible to a significant degree for the creation of the conditions which led to war.

The initial period of U.S. activism was a continuation of the policies of the Reagan administration. This was most apparent with regard to U.S. policy towards Central America. U.S. military involvement in this critical region increased steadily from 1987 through 1990. The chief aim of successive American administrations was to modify the policies (and replace the leadership) of the government of Nicaragua. Through materiel and diplomatic support of the anti-Sandinista "Contra" insurgents, financial and military assistance to surrounding Central American nations, and finally through the use of the superior U.S. military assets in the region to deter any Soviet or Cuban intervention, the United States was able to achieve its goal.

The late stages of this situation were particularly relevant to later events. By the summer of 1989, the "Contra" insurgents had succeeded through their domination of the countryside and of most of Nicaragua's Caribbean coast in denying the use of much of Nicaragua's economic resources to the Managua government. Only by regular resupply from abroad, not only of military equipment, but of machinery, fuel, and even certain key food products, could the Sandinistas have continued fighting. Knowing this, the United States declared in November of 1989 that it would enforce an "embargo" against the supply to Nicaragua of a broad list of "war-making" materials. While the American declaration did not amount to an official blockade of Nicaragua, deployment of U.S. naval forces in the Caribbean and Western Pacific was sufficient to deter the Soviet Union or its allies from attempting to defy U.S. wishes. Cut off from material support, the Nicaraguan Army forced the Sandinistas to negotiate. While the talks dragged on, the impatient military staged a coup and initiated a power-sharing arrangements with "Contra" leaders in February, 1990.

The success of U.S. policy in Central America, and in particular the demonstrated effectiveness of U.S. naval strength as a deterrent to Soviet escalation, seems to have weighed heavily in the administration's decision to become more directly involved in the conflict between Vietnam and the Chinese-backed insurgents contesting the puppet government in Kampuchea in 1991. The evolving Sino-American relationship was also of considerable importance in determining U.S. Asian policy in the early 1990s. Ties

between the U.S. and China had improved steadily for over a decade and, by 1990, included substantial cooperation on security matters.

A final factor leading to renewed U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia was the shift in Chinese policy which occurred in the late 1980s. At this time, the Chinese shifted from almost exclusive backing of the Khmer Rouge to a policy which encouraged the growth of other groups opposing the pro-Vietnamese government in Phnom Penh. The dreadful international reputation which the Khmer Rouge had acquired during their short but brutal period of rule in the mid-1970s had made it impossible for the United States to consider backing them openly in the 1980s, while their role as by far the largest of the anti-Vietnamese insurgent groups, and their near-monopoly of Chinese support, made it practically impossible for the United States or anyone else to play a significant role in Kampuchea without involving them. When the Chinese moved away from the Khmer Rouge, it provided a measure of legitimacy and a significant improvement in the material conditions of other groups, making it possible for the first time for the United States to find potential allies which were at once acceptable politically and viable militarily.

In the late months of 1990, the U.S. administration, fresh from its victory in Central America, entered into secret negotiations with China to define a coordinated policy for the two countries in Southeast Asia. Three conclusions were reached in these discussions: (i) A combination of Chinese material support and advice and sophisticated U.S. weapons should be made available to the non-Khmer Rouge forces in Kampuchea; (ii) A planned rebel offensive should coincide with an increase in conventional military pressure from China on Vietnam's northern border in order to prevent Vietnam from reinforcing its forces in Kampuchea and; (iii) U.S. sea and air forces in the region would be strengthened to deter any move by the Soviet Union to aid its Vietnamese ally directly.

The first two aspects of this strategy worked largely as anticipated. The rebel offensive which got underway in the spring of 1991 enjoyed considerable success, while Chinese forces kept the bulk of the Vietnamese army tied down on its northern border. The Soviet reaction, however, was not as anticipated. Rather than attempting to support Vietnam directly through an increase in military supply, or even through the introduction of Soviet ground or air forces into Vietnam, the Soviet Union put military pressure directly on China's northern border.

Beginning in August 1991, Soviet air and ground forces in the Far East were reinforced and undertook a series of maneuvers near the Chinese border; these moves

clearly were meant to convey a political message. At the same time, Soviet naval forces in the Far East were strengthened and their level of activity increased. Significantly, this naval activity also took place primarily in the north, rather than near the scene of U.S./Chinese activity in Southeast Asia. Just as the U.S.S.R.'s air and ground maneuvers were aimed at Chinese positions in Manchuria, so these naval deployments were intended to demonstrate Soviet ability to threaten U.S. assets in Korea and Japan. With these moves, the U.S.S.R. suggested that it too had learned from the Central American episode of the previous year. When establishing a military challenge to the policies of its rivals, it took care to do so in a region where it was assured of a substantial geo-strategic advantage.

U.S. and Chinese reactions to the Soviet moves differed sharply. While American analysts tended to downplay the possible threat to U.S. positions posed by Soviet air and naval actions, Chinese leaders, in the last months of 1991, took the Soviet threat to their borders extremely seriously, and undertook to persuade the Americans to help them meet it. A visible commitment to China's defense, Beijing argued, would in all probability deter any overt Soviet aggression. To demonstrate such a commitment, the Chinese government suggested privately that a number of U.S. tactical air squadrons be deployed to Manchuria in the spring of 1992. This move, timed to coincide with the beginning of the dry season in Southeast Asia, and thus with the beginning of the likely Vietnamese counter-offensive in Kampuchea, would permit China to exert whatever military force was needed in the south to support its Kampuchean allies without fear of Soviet aggression in the north.

The reaction to this secret proposal in the American administration was not initially hostile, although military leaders, from the first, were reluctant to consider the deployment of U.S. units to China. The entire calculation of risk and benefit was changed radically, however, when the Soviet Union, through sources in Washington or Beijing, learned of the proposed Sino-American plan. The Soviet government chose to make its response in the form of a series of public statements which, after revealing Chinese and American plans--at a time when most officials of both countries still knew nothing about them--proceeded to outline the likely Soviet response in remarkably precise terms. Any further aggression against Vietnam or Vietnam's Kampuchean ally, either directly by Chinese and U.S. forces or by local forces under the control of these two countries, the Soviet Union stated, would be considered an attack on the vital interests of the Soviet Union, and would invite reprisal against the interests of the aggressor powers. While Manchuria and Korea were never mentioned by name, Soviet references were clearly to these areas. Further, Soviet statements continued, the introduction of American forces into China would be

interpreted as preparation for an attack on the Soviet homeland, which would invite action against both China and the United States. In the case of China, this could be interpreted as merely a threat of conventional actions along the border. Considering the military assets of the great powers, however, such a direct threat against the U.S. could be carried out only by recourse to strategic nuclear weapons. This is indeed how Soviet statements were interpreted by the U.S. government, as well as by the American media and political establishment. As if to emphasize the point, U.S. intelligence agencies reported that the day-to-day alert level of Soviet strategic nuclear forces in the Far East had been increased, although the actual operational significance of this increase was the subject of some controversy.

Although most officials discounted the Soviet threat against the U.S., the administration chose to extricate itself from the situation before events got out of hand. Since plans for the basing of U.S. units in China had never been made public, or even approved officially by the president, it was possible to take the position that they had never been considered. Soviet fears were dismissed by U.S. officials as a typical Soviet campaign; the U.S. government denied that it had any plans to send forces into China. This position was never fully accepted in domestic political and media circles. Intense public controversy followed from the incident, and expanded to cover the entire field of U.S. foreign policy methods and goals.

The impact of the U.S. retreat on Sino-American relations was also of major importance. While the Chinese government agreed to cooperate with the United States in denying any intention to base U.S. units in China, private reactions in Beijing to the U.S. "betrayal" were bitter. The Chinese government interpreted the U.S. reactions as a demonstration of the limits beyond which the United States would not be willing to risk its own security for the benefit of an ally. The fact that the Chinese themselves had been willing to accept much more substantial risks--indeed, many Chinese leaders still considered the Soviet threats against the United States to be empty gestures--further lowered China's opinion of the value of the United States as an ally. It is appropriate to date the beginning of the deterioration in Sino-American relations, which was to be a major feature of the international environment in the late 1990s, with this series of events.

In the United States, the revelation first of the administration's risky secret foreign policy initiative, and then of its abrupt retreat before a Soviet threat, undermined its political position and seriously compromised the president's chances for reelection in 1992. Under pressure both from reinvigorated anti-interventionist sentiment in a growing liberal

movement, and from hard-line forces in his own party, the president announced that he would not seek reelection. The president then elected in November 1992 was strongly committed to the reduction of U.S. military forces abroad and the immediate curtailment of "foolhardy confrontationist adventures," such as the one in Southeast Asia. In consequence, the American presence on the international scene was reduced sharply in the succeeding four years.

While the new administration claimed to be committed to a strong defense, its security priorities differed sharply from those of its predecessor. Total manpower levels were reduced and the number of ground forces deployed abroad fell sharply. The principal instrument of any future U.S. intervention, in the mind of the new president, should be the Navy. This was considered to be a less dangerous policy than the practice of stationing ground and air forces abroad, which previous administrations had turned to increasingly. Accordingly, the shipbuilding and modernization programs of the U.S. Navy proceeded, on the whole, as planned, while both the Army and Air Force were forced to take cuts in virtually all areas, and particularly in funding for forces intended for rapid deployment or other "interventionist" missions.

### Europe and NATO

The relationship between the United States and its partners in the Atlantic Alliance did not undergo any sweeping changes in the late 1980s or early 1990s, but its security aspects lost a great deal of the urgency which had characterized them in the previous decade. East-West relations in Europe remained relatively quiet, and no problems emerged which seemed to threaten the survival of the alliance. In general, both the United States and Europe benefited from the period of relative prosperity and economic stability which followed the mild recession of 1989-90.

The propensity towards unilateral foreign policy initiatives on the part of the United States did cause considerable controversy among the members of NATO. There had been opposition in Europe to the policies of successive American administrations towards Central America, and in particular towards Nicaragua, from the early 1980s until 1989. At that time, the level of controversy decreased for the simple reason that U.S. policy was demonstrably successful. With regard to the much less successful U.S. efforts in Southeast Asia, however, opposition was strong and long-lasting.

Accordingly, the reaction in Europe to the shift in U.S. policy which followed the presidential election of 1992 was primarily one of relief. The dramatic conclusion of the



U.S. initiative in Southeast Asia seemed to demonstrate convincingly that the risk to peace involved in U.S. international activism vastly outweighed any possible threat to Europe from the Soviet Union. In practical terms, the U.S. troop levels in Europe were reduced somewhat, although not to the extent which the U.S. administration had intended originally. Significantly, U.S. tactical and intermediate range nuclear weapons remained in Europe in the same number as in the late 1980s. The overriding foreign policy priority of the major European nations in the 1990s was the steady development of a "normal" relationship with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In this, they were largely successful as both East and West benefited from expanded economic and political relations.

The structures and organization of the Atlantic Alliance remained intact during this time. Indeed, popular opposition to NATO in Europe fell off considerably. The reason for the greater acceptance of the alliance, however, was that its military effectiveness, and thus its cost to U.S. and European taxpayers, was allowed to decline throughout the decade. Troop levels fell in all European countries and the U.S. military presence in Germany was reduced by two division-equivalents. Technological development programs, including the modernization of conventional forces and expansion of the French and British nuclear forces also were slowed down.

### **South Asia and the Middle East**

In contrast to the relatively tranquil trend in Europe, the evolution of events in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Persian Gulf was in the direction of increased violence and confrontation in the early and mid-1990s. At the root of much of the region's turmoil was the substantial erosion of internal stability which took place in both Iran and Pakistan and led to a decline in the regional influence of these two key states, as well as turning each into an attractive target for foreign intervention.

The decline of Pakistan can be traced to a number of closely related events which took place in the early 1990s, beginning with the consolidation of Soviet influence in Afghanistan, which was completed by 1991. This Soviet success, which took place despite the increasingly open support of the United States for the Afghan rebels, was a severe blow to pro-U.S. forces in Pakistan. It served to aggravate the already high level of internal political tension within the country and, in particular, strengthened the hand of Islamic fundamentalist forces. By 1991, these forces were strong enough to force the resignation of President Zia-al-Haq, who was made responsible for the failed Afghan policy and a symbol of the now discredited alliance with the United States.

The new government proceeded to implement a number of far-reaching changes in Pakistani policy. On the domestic level, "Shahira," or strict Islamic law, was implemented as official government policy. On the international side, it went without saying that the government would distance itself from the United States. A more important move in the short term, however, was the new government's policy towards India. Reversing over a decade of quiet progress towards more normal relations between the two South Asian states, Pakistan adopted a harsh anti-Indian line beginning in 1991.

The most alarming aspect of this new policy was Pakistan's renewed effort to develop and deploy nuclear weapons. Without U.S. pressures to hinder it, the Pakistani nuclear industry was believed by most observers to be capable of developing usable weapons within a period of two years. It was further rumored that China was once again providing technical assistance to the Pakistani nuclear establishment. All of this was taken very seriously in New Delhi, and the Indian government issued numerous statements calling the attention of the international community to Pakistan's activities, and calling on Islamabad to return to a more reasonable course of action.

Far from moderating their activities, however, the Pakistanis began to speak officially of their intent to deploy the "Islamic bomb" and further engaged in increasingly serious military provocations on the disputed northern frontier with India. By early 1993, officials of the Indian government had run out of patience, and their military advisors were becoming convinced that Pakistan's nuclear threat would soon become a reality. Accordingly, India speeded up its own military preparations and issued an ultimatum. Pakistan would either give up its military nuclear program and open its nuclear facilities to international inspection or face war. Far from bowing to these demands, the government of Pakistan called on all Islamic nations to rally behind it in its struggle with the Indian threat.

It is not clear who the Pakistanis believed would come to their assistance. The moderate Arab states were alarmed at this new threat to regional stability, and sought only to bring the conflict to a prompt conclusion. The government of Iran, for its part, was so weakened by internal dissension (see below) that it would have been incapable of intervening abroad, assuming it had wished to do so. Messages of support did come from a number of the more radical Islamic nations in Asia and the Middle East, but were not followed by any concrete action. Thus, with the exception of a small number of Chinese advisors who were in the country before the start of hostilities, Pakistan received no aid from abroad when the Indians finally attacked in August 1993.

It is possible that Pakistan's leaders did not truly believe that India would strike unless Pakistan moved first. India did attack, however, and the result was devastating. Air raids on the 6th of August succeeded in destroying Pakistan's main nuclear research station and a uranium enrichment plant under construction nearby. At the same time, Indian ground forces defeated Pakistani units decisively in the Punjab and the deserts of the far south. Only in the difficult mountainous terrain of Kashmir did Pakistani units acquit themselves relatively well. This was clearly insufficient, however, and Pakistan was forced to sue for peace on the 3rd of September, or face having its capital come under direct attack.

The long-term consequences of this brief war were considerable. The Pakistani government's military leadership was largely discredited, and the political position of the Army was generally eroded. Although enthusiasm for fundamentalist Islam within Pakistan did not seem to be waning, the country's faith in its co-religionists as military allies had received a serious blow. Except for its cordial, but necessarily distant relations with China, Pakistan was left with very little in the way of useful alliances with militarily relevant states. Such moderate Arab nations as Egypt and Saudi Arabia kept a considerable distance between themselves and the now demonstrably erratic government of Pakistan.

This situation took a severe toll on the military effectiveness of the Pakistani armed forces. Cut off from U.S., as well as Soviet, supplies of advanced weapons, and lacking the financial means to purchase them on the open market, Pakistan was unable to make up the losses of military equipment which it had suffered in the war with India. Together with the armed forces' loss of prestige and authority, this material weakness set the stage for a sharp increase in anti-government activity throughout Pakistan. This was most severe in the northern and western portions of the country, where a variety of ethnic groups took the opportunity to reassert their traditional hostility to any form of central government.

While these changes were taking place in Pakistan, another series of events was underway which resulted immediately in the eclipse of Iran as a major regional power, and which would lead eventually to Soviet intervention in the northwestern part of that country. The disintegration within Iran grew out of the serious losses which the country suffered as a result of the drawn-out war with Iraq, which did not come to an end until 1990. In the late 1980s, increased support from Arab countries and advanced weapons purchased from the Soviet Union and Western Europe had allowed Iraq to inflict ever-increasing losses on Iranian forces. Despite years of tactical failures and high casualties, Iran had refused even to consider breaking off the war.

Only the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 made the end of hostilities possible. Although no official statements were issued by either government, Iranian attacks gradually stopped along the entire length of the front. Since Iraq had long since limited its strategy to defensive actions, this led to a complete end of the fighting. Extensive fortifications and a substantial garrison were maintained on either side of the de-facto cease-fire line--which in fact coincided more or less to the pre-war border.

The end of the war with Iraq, however, did not bring peace within Iran; instead, a number of internal problems, latent during the lifetime of the Ayatollah, came to the fore. "Secular" elements both on the left--the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party and the Iranian Mujaheddin--and the right--elements loyal to the former Shah--had been thoroughly suppressed during Khomeini's lifetime, and still had very little influence. However, opposing currents emerged within the Islamic government and clashed openly, beginning in 1991, as the struggle for personal power became more intense. Western intelligence sources distinguished two principal trends. One group of Iranian clerics supported an evolution towards a more rigid separation of religious and governmental functions, and sought accordingly to strengthen the authority and independence of the official government; this faction seemed to have the support of the Iranian army. A second faction, supported primarily by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards, argued instead for a system of total fusion between religious and secular authority, and spoke of a "continuous Islamic revolution." Armed clashes between supporters of these groups were reported in Tehran and other large cities in 1992.

Another serious problem faced by Iran was the resurgence of active separatist movements among its Kurdish population. Kurdish "nationalism" had long been a disruptive force in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. The Soviet Union had long provided low level support to left-wing Kurdish elements as part of a general policy to encourage dissension in both Iran and Turkey.

Iran's increased weakness in the early 1990s allowed Kurdish rebels greater freedom-of-action and increased the incentives for Soviet meddling. Under a strong Iranian government, support of the Kurds merely provided a certain amount of political leverage for the Soviet Union. In the new circumstances, however, the prospect of actually detaching a portion of Iran became a realistic Soviet goal.

The situation within Iran reached a crisis point in 1994. By this time, the Islamic extremist faction seemed to have triumphed over its more moderate rivals in Tehran. The

result was an extensive purge of the leadership of the armed forces and a significant reduction in the size of the regular army. The Revolutionary Guards, in contrast, grew in size and importance but, while their loyalty and enthusiasm were undeniable, their military efficiency was at best doubtful.

The Soviet Union was not slow to take advantage of this situation. Throughout the winter of 1993-94, it increased substantially the level of assistance to Kurdish separatists in northwestern Iran. In the spring of 1994, these groups possessed sophisticated heavy weapons and were able to carry out successful attacks on urban areas and Iranian military positions. By June, a so-called government in exile of the newly proclaimed Democratic Republic of Kurdistan (DRK) was in place in Iraq.

The prospect of a new pro-Soviet state in the region greatly alarmed Saudi Arabia and other regional powers. None, however, went so far as to offer assistance to the Tehran government, which itself had been a significant threat to their security for over a decade. By far the most concerned state was Turkey, which was located adjacent to the area of hostilities and had a substantial, and potentially unstable, Kurdish population of its own. Beyond increasing its own military preparations along the eastern border, as well as the security apparatus within Turkish Kurdistan, there was little that Turkey could do, however. Neither the United States, then fully committed to a policy of global military disengagement, nor the European NATO countries, anxious to avoid jeopardizing their relations with the Soviet Union, were willing to back any Turkish initiative in the region.

Under such conditions, the Kurdish separatists made rapid progress. In November 1994, Tabriz, the key city of northwestern Iran, fell to the rebels and was proclaimed the capital of the independent DRK. The new state was recognized immediately by the Soviet Union and its allies. While the government in Tehran in no way accorded official recognition to the secession of the northern provinces, it seemed powerless to prevent it. By the early months of 1995, no Iranian military presence remained within the confines of the new Kurdish state.

One welcome, albeit unintentional, by-product of the situation in Iran was a lessening of tensions between the Arab countries and the state of Israel. These events were linked in two distinct ways. First, Syria declined in importance due in part to Iran's eclipse. The Damascus regime had long been Iran's most important ally in the Arab world, a role which had put strains on Syria's relations with other Arab countries. Further clouding the prospects of the Syrian regime were internal difficulties. After the death of President Hafez

al-Assad in 1990, the dominant position of the Awali ethnic group within the Syrian state and army was increasingly challenged, forcing the military government which succeeded Assad to devote the major part of its resources to internal security.

A second factor linking events in Southwest Asia to a more peaceful Arab-Israeli relationship was the renewed emphasis placed by the principal moderate states in the Middle East, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, on the danger posed by the Soviet Union to regional security. In the eyes of Arab statesmen, the conflict with Israel finally began to be eclipsed by the greater issue of resistance to Soviet domination. In this context, only the stateless Palestinian groups and a few radical states such as Libya attempted to keep up the struggle against Israel, using primarily terrorist tactics. Although the moderates (except for Egypt) did not sign formal peace treaties with Israel, a quiet process of political and economic reconciliation began to take hold.

### **The Evolution of East Asia**

We have already noted the uneven course of Sino-American relations in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The failure of the two countries' Southeast Asian initiative of 1991-92 increased the influence of individuals in the Chinese government who opposed continued rapprochement with the West. These leaders included strict Maoists, who believed that the ideals of China's revolution were being destroyed by the reforms of China's economy; Chinese nationalists, who resented the increasing Westernization of China's society and culture; and pragmatic strategists, who saw the U.S. retreat in 1992 as symptomatic of America's fundamental unreliability as an ally.

U.S. relations with the regime on Taiwan had been de-emphasized during the period of close U.S./China cooperation, but had never been curtailed entirely, much to the annoyance of the Beijing government. When U.S./China relations began to deteriorate, the continued U.S. ties to Taiwan were employed by anti-U.S. groups in Beijing as an additional reason for China to move away from its excessively close relationship with the United States.

Meanwhile, U.S. relations with Japan had also encountered difficulties, primarily due to the long-standing economic rivalry between the two countries. A portion of rising anti-American sentiments in Japanese political circles, however, came from nationalist forces which believed that Japan had been dependent on U.S. military support for too long, and should now employ its undisputed economic strength to achieve a greater degree of political independence. The U.S. political retreat which followed the Sino-American operation in

Kampuchea strengthened the position of those in Japan who believed that alliance with the United States was becoming an increasing liability. According to these groups, Japan should seek to develop independent military means, including nuclear weapons to buttress a more assertive national stance in world affairs.

In Korea, the perpetuation of a tense political climate left the Seoul government increasingly dependent on U.S. support. A series of anti-government demonstrations had come very near to disrupting the 1988 Seoul Olympics; only intrusive mediation between the government and its opponents, carried out by the United States, managed to control the situation. Following the decline in Sino-American relations in the 1990s, radical groups in South Korea, many of which claimed to follow some form of Maoist ideology, began to gain support from Beijing. Their actions grew bolder and more violent, and were met by a parallel increase in the level of government repression.

Despite the increasingly poor human rights record of the South Korean government, no U.S. administration seriously considered cutting its ties with Seoul. Considering the increasingly difficult nature of U.S. relations with Japan and China, U.S. planners saw South Korea as possibly the last dependable U.S. ally in northeast Asia. Allowing it to fall under Soviet or Chinese domination--which was considered the inevitable consequence of an American pull-out, would be a severe, perhaps fatal, blow to U.S. influence in that part of the world. Accordingly, U.S. support for South Korea remained strong, and the presence of U.S. troops in the country was never seriously questioned.

Conditions were somewhat more promising in the United States' final Far Eastern ally, the Philippines. The efforts made in the late 1980s by the government in Manila to improve its popular standing seemed to bear fruit. The level of domestic opposition diminished considerably, and most of the insurgent groups linked to the Philippine Communist Party and its military wing, the New People's Army, stopped carrying out armed activity. While some of the rebels officially signed accords with the government and surrendered their weapons, however, many did not. The possibility of renewed violence was thus not eliminated.

Continued good relations with the United States were ensured when the Philippine government agreed to renew the treaty granting the U.S. use of the military facilities at Clark Field and Subic bay. While the number of combat units at Clark fluctuated somewhat during the 1990s, a constant U.S. military presence in the the Philippines was maintained.

## THE EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL EVENTS, 1995-2000

The changing attitudes and alignments of the major Asian countries, which began in the early 1990s, became much more pronounced in the latter part of the decade. Both China and Japan shifted away officially from pro-U.S. policies--China moving into a closer relationship with the Soviet Union, and Japan asserting greater military and political independence. These moves were partially balanced by U.S. gains in South and Southwest Asia which took place at the end of the decade, following a new shift in American foreign policy towards a more assertive stance. In the end, though, the tensions created by great power operations in these two key regions led to war in the year 2000.

### Realignment in Japan

By the end of 1995, nationalistic forces within the ruling Japanese political party, the Liberal Democratic Party, had gained sufficient strength to force a shift in Japanese policy. After fifty years of military "self effacement," nationalist leaders claimed that the time was overdue for Japan to play its proper political and military role in Asia. Japanese nationalists emphasized particularly the need for Japan to play a stronger hand in Southeast Asia, particularly with regard to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, which provided both key natural resources and important markets for Japanese industry. With the eclipse of American power in the Far East, many Japanese felt that Southeast Asia was vulnerable to threats from both China and, through its Vietnamese ally, the U.S.S.R.

Vietnam, backed strongly by the Soviet Union and now secure in its control of Kampuchea and Laos, seemed to pose a serious potential threat to Thailand, while both Indonesia and Malaysia were known to be susceptible to internal dissension which, at various times, had erupted into violent leftist insurgent movements. In the past, these forces had been supported by China, and such Chinese-backed subversion remained a threat. In the 1990s, however, the Japanese believed that the greater threat was posed by the Soviet Union, the nation which both moderate and radical Japanese agreed was Japan's principal opponent in Asia. Japan also had outstanding differences with the U.S.S.R. closer to home. The problem of the four southernmost Kurile Islands, which were claimed by Japan but occupied by the Soviets since the second world war, had never been resolved and was a "cause celebre" among hard-line Japanese nationalists.

The situation in Korea was also a source of concern to Japan, although in this case Japanese nationalist sentiments led to conflicts of interest not only with the Soviet Union, but also with the United States. The entire Korean peninsula was regarded by Japanese



hard-liners as part of Japan's "natural" zone of influence. Accordingly, Soviet domination of North Korea was added to the long list of grievances held against the U.S.S.R. U.S. influence in South Korea, however, was not viewed any more kindly by these groups. Relations between Seoul and Tokyo were also strained by the fact that South Korea had become a major economic rival for Japan in international markets. One of the advantages of Japanese rearmament, according to the proponents of this policy, would be that it would allow Japan to compete for influence not only with the Soviet Union, but also with the United States in Southeast Asia and Korea.

Parliamentary elections in Japan in March 1996 formally brought the nationalist faction into power. Its leaders proceeded quickly to implement the policies which they had long advanced. The Japanese government announced that it would no longer be bound by the limitations placed on its armed forces by the events of the 1940s: The Japanese constitution was rewritten to permit the establishment of normal armed forces, and was passed overwhelmingly in a popular referendum. The government announced that the security treaty with the United States would be allowed to expire when it came up for renewal in 2000, and a schedule was drawn up for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Japan prior to that time. Japanese military spending was increased substantially, with large shares going to the development of air and naval forces.

Quietly, the new government decided to develop and produce nuclear weapons and initiated a covert program to this end Japan's advanced scientific and industrial establishment, which already possessed nuclear research and commercial power facilities, as well as facilities to process nuclear materials, ensured that this goal would be reached easily in a relatively brief time. Further, Japan's considerable experience in rocket and missile technology, gained through its civilian space program, ensured that sophisticated delivery systems would be available for any nuclear weapons the country developed.

Although Japan did not publicize its decision to develop nuclear weapons, clues that such a program was underway were soon discovered by both Western and Soviet intelligence agencies. In the United States, this provided more material for the forces which had long warned of the dangers of nuclear proliferation, and which were already alarmed by the renewed nuclear competition in South Asia. Reaction in the East was much more severe.

The Soviet Union, reasonably enough, saw itself as the principal target of any Japanese nuclear program. In addition to the concrete threats to Soviet interests in East and

Southeast Asia represented by the more aggressive stance of Japan, the Japanese resurgence raised the specter of the historical clash of Russia and Japan for domination of the Far East--a conflict in which the Russian record was far from brilliant.

On a more practical level, however, Soviet leaders realized that the shift in Japanese policy provided them with a long-sought opportunity to improve relations with China. Some progress had already been made in this direction due to the decline in Sino-American relations which followed 1992. The new Japanese militarism provided further incentive for China to rebuild security ties with the U.S.S.R. Indeed, although the main thrust of Japan's new foreign policy was directed against the Soviet Union and its allies, it was clear that significant growth in Japan's military power would threaten Chinese influence throughout the Far East. It also was clear that the United States would not, at least in the foreseeable future, provide an effective counterweight to Japanese influence. A growing current of opinion in Beijing thus favored rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

#### **U.S.-Taiwan Relations and the New Sino-Soviet Alliance**

The process of Sino-Soviet rapprochement received an unexpected boost from a series of events in the United States and Taiwan in late 1996 and early 1997. At the root of the Taiwanese situation was the gradual accession to power of a new generation of leaders. Without personal ties to the mainland, these men took a very different view of Taiwan's role and future from that of their predecessors. Rather than a Chinese government-in-exile, they saw themselves as the leaders of a dynamic and independent country which, in its nearly fifty years of existence, had achieved a remarkable degree of economic and social modernization. This reassessment culminated in the drafting of a new constitution for the island in the summer of 1996. In the document, the island state was renamed the Republic of Taiwan. All claims to sovereignty over mainland China were abandoned, but the claims of any current or future government in Beijing to rule Taiwan were rejected. The old Kuomintang was abolished and replaced by an organization known as the Taiwan National Party. The new party shared with the old a near-monopoly on the institutions of power and a fiercely anti-Communist ideology. While renouncing the Kuomintang's dream of the forceful reunification of China, Taiwan's new leaders made it clear that they would defend their island against any outside aggressor, and most especially against the regime in Beijing.

The government of the People's Republic of China was not slow to denounce this development in the most violent terms. Beijing reasserted its claim to sovereignty over

Taiwan and warned that the intransigence of the island's new government could lead only to conflict and bloodshed. Despite this fierce rhetoric, the Chinese government made no immediate military moves against the new government of Taiwan in the hopes that international isolation and internal dissension would bring it down. In the short term, however, trends moved adversely from Beijing's perspective; the new regime actually gained the recognition of a few key states.

The developments on Taiwan, which amounted to the long-discussed unilateral declaration of independence, received considerable praise from the nationalist forces then ruling Japan, for example, who promptly extended official recognition to the new state. Mindful of history, Taiwan's leaders were not anxious to exchange the threat of Chinese invasion for the reality of Japanese domination. Accordingly, the government in Taipei moved to establish political and economic relations with Tokyo, but was careful to keep its distance in political and economic terms.

For foreign support, Taiwan looked rather to Washington, the traditional ally of anti-Communist Chinese, and found its timing propitious. After four years of near-isolationism, the United States was showing signs of resurgence as an active player in the Far East and throughout the world. This was due in large part to the evolution of American domestic politics.

As the presidential elections of 1996 approached, it became clear that the incumbent administration had lost a good deal of the support which had carried it into office four years earlier. American public opinion, which had shied away from the threat of confrontation in 1992, now protested against the seeming impotence of the United States in the international arena. An economic downturn in 1995-96 further eroded the administration's popularity. Meanwhile, conservative political forces had largely resolved the policy and personal differences which had divided them in 1992, and now presented a united front. Their platform was based on the proposition that the U.S. government should be a strong moral and political force, both domestically and internationally. In practical terms, this was a program for an activist social policy at home and a renewal of U.S. assertiveness abroad. A substantial increase in defense spending was high on their list of priorities.

Support for the regime on Taiwan came naturally to this rising force in American politics. Rejecting the former U.S. policy of accommodation, and even alliance with Beijing, the opposition party's presidential candidate announced that, if elected, he would support the Republic of Taiwan with any and all means necessary. His victory in the

election of November 1996 made a confrontation between the United States and China virtually inevitable.

Indeed, Beijing's line towards the Republic of Taiwan hardened considerably after the U.S. election. In order to gain leverage against the United States, Chinese leaders saw no option but to take the evolution of their foreign policy to its logical conclusion and accept an official reconciliation with Moscow. The Soviets were glad to oblige and, at the conclusion of a Sino-Soviet summit meeting in March 1997, the two Communist nations announced the signing of a series of economic and security treaties; the Sino-Soviet alliance was once again a reality.

### **Instability in Southwestern Asia**

While these shifts and realignments were taking place in the Far East, the cycle of violence and disintegration of authority which had characterized South Asia and the Persian Gulf in the early 1990s continued. This process was marked particularly in Pakistan, where long-standing ethnic conflicts were exacerbated by the weakening of central authority and exploited by the Soviet Union, and in the Kurdish regions of Iran and Turkey, where Soviet-backed Kurdish secessionist forces continued to gain strength.

Soviet support of the secessionist Kurdish state in northern Iran was a source of increasing alarm among other nations in the region. Chief among these, as before, was Turkey. The fears which the Turkish government had expressed in 1994 concerning the spillover of Kurdish insurgency from Iran into Turkey were borne out in 1997. Still backed by Iraq and the Soviet Union, the now "independent" Kurds of Iran began encouraging and assisting their countrymen across the Turkish border to follow their example. The latest shift in U.S. foreign policy, however, gave Turkey hope that it might now be possible to obtain assistance in controlling the insurgency.

Turkish warnings of the Soviet threat in Southwest Asia were received with more sympathy in Washington in 1997 than they had been in 1994. The U.S. government agreed to increase military aid to Turkey and to supply the Turks with weapons, such as advanced attack helicopters, which would be particularly useful against irregular insurgent forces. The transfer of U.S. personnel to Turkey was not considered at this time, nor had it been requested publicly by the Turks. Despite the new administration's desire for a more assertive international posture, it was reluctant to engage in open foreign military activities so early in its term and, in any case, claimed that the cuts in U.S. force levels and readiness carried out by its predecessor made it impossible to consider the involvement of U.S.

forces abroad at this time. Nevertheless, the Turkish request was important in the evolution of U.S. policy; it contributed to focusing U.S. attention on Southwest Asia, thus making American leaders more responsive to other events in that troubled region, including the increasingly visible Soviet participation in the growing insurgency in Pakistan.

By 1996, Pakistan was faced with a large and well organized separatist movement in the remote western region of Baluchistan. The rebels in this area received considerable support from the Soviet Union, by way of its Afghan ally. In addition to arms and training, Afghanistan also provided the Baluchi rebels with access to sanctuaries across the Afghan border. In this way, the Soviet Union sought to repeat in Baluchistan its successful detachment of the Kurds from Iran. In both cases, the central government of the country under attack was isolated internationally and weak internally, following a costly and unsuccessful foreign war. The stakes for the Soviet Union were higher in Pakistan than they had been in Iran. If a viable Soviet ally could be created in Baluchistan, the U.S.S.R. would have direct access to the Indian Ocean and a commanding position on the approaches to the Persian Gulf. Soviet facilities in Baluchistan would have secure overland links to the Soviet Union through the newly improved transport network of Afghanistan, making them more accessible, and thus more valuable, than existing Soviet facilities in Ethiopia and South Yemen.

Despite their eagerness to grasp this prize, Soviet leaders realized that it would be difficult to hold against the active opposition of the United States. For this reason, it would be necessary to conceal Soviet involvement with the Baluchi rebels and, more generally, to avoid creating an atmosphere of conflict with the United States until the existence of the new Baluchi state was secured. Barring a great power conflict, the Soviets believed, the United States, even under a more assertive government, would be unlikely to involve itself in the fate of the thoroughly unpopular Pakistani government.

Subsequent events showed that initially, at least, the Soviets had been largely correct in this reasoning. Throughout the early stages of the Baluchi insurgency, in 1996 and the first months of 1997, it received little official notice and virtually no public attention in the United States. For its part, the U.S. government concentrated instead on developments in the Far East and on a largely unsuccessful attempt to revive a more active regime of security cooperation in Western Europe.

The regional powers of South Asia and the Gulf region, however, did not take such a distant view of events in Pakistan. Indeed, this latest Soviet initiative, however veiled, was

a source of considerable concern in the area. Saudi Arabia, for one, was quick to realize the implications of this latest indirect Soviet aggression and to seek to direct international attention to it. The Saudis had a history of friendship and military cooperation with Pakistan dating back over thirty years. Although relations between the two countries had been strained severely following the radicalization of the Pakistani government and the Saudis' lack of support for Pakistan's recent war with India, the Saudi government still considered Pakistan as one of the keys to security in Southwest Asia, and was unwilling to stand by idly as it disintegrated.

Even the government of India, which had a long tradition of alliance with the Soviet Union--and no trace of sympathy for Pakistan--was alarmed at the prospect of Soviet domination of Baluchistan, fearing that it would lead to the inevitable disintegration of Pakistan and, in all likelihood, to further Soviet gains. While the U.S.S.R. as a powerful but distant ally had often been useful to India, a Soviet surrogate as an immediate neighbor was a development which New Delhi did not relish.

In the latter part of 1997, the concerns voiced by India and Saudi Arabia were confirmed by U.S. analysts, who reported that there was little doubt that the Baluchi insurgents were receiving substantial covert Soviet support by way of Afghanistan. Further, the extreme military weakness of the Pakistani central government had left the insurgents in effective control of most of the sparsely populated desert and mountains of Baluchistan and, more alarmingly of the strategically important coastline. U.S. leaders concluded that a demonstration of U.S. interest in the area was critical, if Baluchistan was to be prevented from falling under permanent Soviet domination. What form this action should take, however, was far from clear. The government of Pakistan continued to pursue a course of radical Islamic fundamentalism and remained hostile to any cooperation with the United States.

As an initial step, beginning in November 1997, the United States increased its naval presence in the Indian Ocean. This move served two distinct purposes. From a military point of view, the most serious threat posed by possible Soviet domination of Baluchistan was the possibility that major naval and air facilities might be constructed there. While rebel activities in the interior of the country were effectively beyond the reach of U.S. interference, a strong naval presence, including aircraft carriers and amphibious forces, might deter overt Soviet activity on the Baluchi coastline.

The second purpose of U.S. naval deployments to the Indian ocean was political. On the domestic level, it represented the first concrete manifestation of the administration's long-promised assertive foreign policy. Internationally, the presence of the U.S. task force symbolized renewed U.S. commitment to regional security and, it was hoped, would rekindle visible support for the United States among the key states of the area. Port calls by U.S. naval ships to Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kenya, and most importantly, India underscored this policy.

At this point, Soviet strategy towards the region changed dramatically. Realizing that there was little chance of maintaining the pretense of non-involvement, Soviet leaders chose to act quickly to consolidate their gains before effective U.S. opposition could be organized. On the first of February 1998, separatist forces in Baluchistan declared themselves to be an independent nation. In fact, the territory claimed by the Popular Republic of Baluchistan (PRB) included a considerable area of southeastern Iran, as well as the zone which the rebels actually controlled in western Pakistan. The new state was recognized at once by the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, as well as by most Soviet allies and, significantly, by China.

Pointing to the presence of U.S. warships off its coast, the Baluchi state claimed that American attack was imminent, and requested assistance from all friendly nations. The government of Afghanistan immediately responded to this request, promising that its forces would act in any way necessary to defend the new state. U.S. intelligence reports indicated that even before this announcement a substantial number of Afghan troops, equipped with sophisticated Soviet weapons, had moved into Baluchistan.

The short-term impact of this bold move was very much along the lines of what the Soviets had foreseen. The United States, although highly critical of the latest development, was left with few practical options beyond denouncing it in the harshest terms. In the longer run, however, the Soviet intervention marked an important turning point in U.S. policy throughout Southwest Asia. By making the pattern of Soviet aggression and expansion unmistakably clear, the separation of Baluchistan made it possible for the United States to set about forging an effective network of alliances with key regional states.

One immediate result was the resumption of indirect cooperation between the United States and Pakistan. While the Islamabad government still refused to deal with the United States directly, it was receptive to offers of support and assistance from Saudi Arabia. In March 1998, Saudi advisors began arriving in Pakistan. In the following months, they

were joined by Saudi and Egyptian special forces units. At the same time, these two countries began supplying Pakistan with large quantities of U.S.-made military equipment, giving Pakistan access to advanced weapons and, perhaps more importantly in the long term, to spare parts and maintenance facilities, for the first time since 1993.

A further result of the Baluchi declaration of independence was the first effort on the part of Iran to break out of its near-total isolation. The Tehran government had conducted very little constructive diplomacy since the victory of radical elements in the internal power struggle of the early 1990s. The creation of a Soviet puppet state in Baluchistan, however, convinced Iran's ruling Imams that some degree of cooperation with outside forces would be essential. Not only did the Baluchis lay claim to vast tracts of Iranian territory, but the creation of this new state left Iran entirely surrounded by Soviet allies, and the very survival of the Tehran regime suddenly seemed doubtful. Accordingly, the Islamic government began seeking slowly and tentatively to improve its relations with such anti-Soviet states in the region as Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Perhaps the most important of Tehran's new foreign contacts was Turkey, with whom Iran shared the Kurdish problem. While Turkey's membership in NATO made it difficult for Iranian leaders, who were still adamant in their anti-Americanism, to consider resumption of normal relations, the possibility of tacit cooperation was increasingly attractive to both sides.

In South Asia, the Indian government was now fully committed to ending its alliance with the Soviet Union, and entered into secret negotiations with the United States to discuss practical steps to combat the unprecedented extension of Soviet influence in Pakistan and Iran. Established regional allies of the United States, Saudi Arabia and, above all, Turkey welcomed the prospect of a more direct U.S. role in the region, and also increased diplomatic efforts to create a united anti-Soviet front.

### **Rising Tension in Southwest Asia and the Far East**

As the United States moved to become more actively involved in Southwest Asia, Soviet leaders sought to devise a strategy which would give them time to consolidate their position. To accomplish this, the Soviets began to exploit a number of opportunities which had been created by political shifts in the Far East. The purpose of these new moves was not so much to make positive gains as to distract American attention and tie down U.S. forces in a region far away from the more significant Soviet gains in Southwest Asia. The presence of China and other Soviet allies in the Far East, such as North Korea and various



pro-Soviet insurgent groups, made it possible for action to be taken against the United States in this region with a minimum of cost and risk to the U.S.S.R. itself.

Whereas the Soviets had restrained China from challenging the government on Taiwan directly when the latter first made its unilateral declaration of independence, Beijing was now encouraged to put military pressure on Taiwan. Beginning in September 1998, Chinese pilots of advanced Soviet aircraft began flying missions into Taiwanese airspace. A number of aerial clashes followed in which both the Chinese and the Taiwanese lost aircraft and pilots.

The Taiwanese government was not slow to request aid from Washington to combat this aggression. Within the U.S. administration, there was considerable support for sending substantial military aid to Taiwan: Support of the Taiwanese had been a major issue in the president's electoral campaign and was considered essential by his military advisors if the United States was to maintain a viable presence in the Far East. Accordingly, the president announced in October 1998 that unless China halted its aggression immediately, U.S. tactical air units would be deployed to Taiwan. As an immediate measure, U.S. naval deployments to the western Pacific were increased to three carrier battle groups and U.S. air units at Clark Air Force Base, north of Manila, were reinforced until a full tactical wing was present.

Since the whole purpose behind the Soviet encouragement of Chinese aggression towards Taiwan was to draw in the United States, the U.S. administration's bellicose statements and actions served only to increase China's military efforts. On November 15, 1998, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party issued an official statement which declared that China's patience with this the "rebel" regime on Taiwan was over. The Taipei government was summoned to give up power at once, or face destruction.

Following this de facto declaration of war, the behavior of Chinese forces was altered sharply. Instead of making chiefly symbolic, although provocative, intrusions into Taiwanese airspace, Chinese aircraft began carrying out attacks on airfields and other military installations. In addition, the Chinese moved to impose an undeclared blockade of the island by attacking merchant ships in the vicinity of Taiwanese ports with apparent disregard for their nationality.

In response to these acts, which constituted not only attacks on Taiwan but serious interferences with international freedom of navigation, the United States acted on its promise to send U.S. forces to Taipei's defense. In December 1999, two aircraft carriers

moved into positions off the coast of Taiwan, and F-14s began carrying out regular patrols over the Formosa Strait. Further, the president announced on December 10th that U.S. ground-based aircraft would be deployed to Taiwan in a few days. The first squadron of F-15s arrived in Taipei on the 14th.

U.S. aircraft clashed with Chinese forces from their arrival in Taiwan. While they were generally successful in their initial encounters with Chinese pilots, U.S. forces did suffer casualties. An American F-14 was shot down on the 20th with the loss of both crewmen. The American public generally supported the administration's action, however, coming as it did in response to blatant Chinese--and, by implication, Soviet--provocation.

In a further effort to draw U.S. attention to the Far East, thus leaving itself a free hand in the Persian Gulf, the Soviet Union sought to undermine the stability of the government of the Philippines. Following a period of relative liberalization following the departure of former President Marcos in 1986, the Philippines had fallen back into a pattern of authoritarian military rule in the mid-1990s. As a result, anti-government insurgents, which had virtually disappeared after 1988, were once more active in the late 1990s. Like previous Philippine rebels, this latest group proclaimed an ill-defined mixture of leftist ideology and ethnic and religious separatism--the Muslim population of the southern Philippines remained largely opposed to the government in Manila. When offers of covert support from China were received by the rebels in 1998, however, they were promptly accepted.

Armed with modern Soviet and Chinese weapons, the Philippine rebels began carrying out attacks on U.S. military bases, something which past rebel groups had always avoided for fear of U.S. retribution. Chinese agents made it clear, however, that such attacks were now expected of any group receiving aid and weapons. As anticipated, the attacks led to calls for strengthened security at U.S. bases and, in due course, additional U.S. Army personnel were dispatched to the Philippines.

While these distractions in the Far East did cause the U.S. to make a significant military commitment to the area, thus decreasing the level of forces available for intervention in Southwest Asia, they did not prevent the United States from pursuing its alliance-building policy in Southwest Asia. In November 1998, the U.S. reached an agreement with India, Saudi Arabia, and Oman to resist the implantation of any Soviet-backed state on the Indian Ocean, the latter two pledging active support while the former promised at least neutrality in case of conflict. The immediate target of this agreement was

clearly the self-proclaimed Popular Republic of Baluchistan. Beyond this, American planners hoped to use this broadly-based anti-Soviet front as a means of regaining a viable security relationship with Pakistan. If that could be accomplished, not only would the position of the Baluchi insurgents become impossible, but the entire Soviet advance towards the Indian Ocean, including even Soviet control of Afghanistan, might be in question.

In the short term, given the difficulty in convincing the Pakistani government to cooperate directly with the United States, let alone with India, the U.S. and its allies were forced to follow an indirect policy. In the fall of 1998, Pakistani troops, now rearmed with U.S. weapons and aided by Egyptian and Saudi special forces, went on the offensive against the Baluchi rebels in Western Pakistan. Although no U.S. forces were present in Pakistan, aircraft from U.S. carriers in the Arabian sea flew regular missions in support of the Saudi and Egyptian forces' anti-insurgency campaign, in addition to providing air cover in case of attacks from Afghan or Soviet aircraft. No such attacks took place in 1998.

In contrast to the aggressive behavior of the Chinese in the skies over Taiwan, the Soviet Union and its Afghan allies carefully avoided direct conflict with the U.S. in Southwest Asia, and limited their actions to supplying the Baluchis with man-portable, surface-to-air missiles, which proved largely ineffective against the sophisticated counter-measures available to U.S. aircraft. Accordingly, the U.S. suffered no casualties in the initial stages of its operations in Baluchistan. The net result of these military actions was to force the Baluchi forces to retreat into the largely desert interior of their territory and return to waging a guerilla-style campaign. Cut off from the support of urban populations, they were once again entirely dependent on assistance from the U.S.S.R. and Afghanistan.

The growing success of the Pakistanis and their allies against the Baluchi rebels encouraged the escalation of the campaign against a better established secessionist state, Soviet-backed Kurdistan. The key U.S. ally in this area was Turkey, but Iran, as its government emerged from its self-imposed isolation, began to play an important role. In March 1999, the Turkish Army began a major offensive to drive Kurdish insurgents from its territory. In the course of this operation, Turkish aircraft were attacked by surface-to-air missiles launched from Iranian Kurdistan. On April 25th, Turkish pilots were ordered to cross the border and strike the source of these attacks. This action led to clashes between Turkish aircraft and Soviet air units stationed in the Kurdish state.

At this point, the Turkish government officially requested the deployment of U.S. forces, specifically tactical air units, to assist it in defending its territory and forces from Soviet aggression. Citing its obligations under the NATO alliance the United States, agreed to help. An initial deployment of four squadrons of U.S. tactical aircraft was in Turkey by May 1, 1999.

By the middle of 1999, thus, a symmetric pattern was developing in U.S./Soviet competition. Increasing American pressure on Soviet allies in Southwest Asia was matched by Soviet and Chinese moves against U.S. allies in the East Asia. Of the two efforts, that of the United States seemed the more successful. In the autumn of 1999, the newly established Kurdish and Baluchi Soviet allies seemed to be in considerable difficulty. The PRB, in particular, would not long survive if the resurgence of the Pakistani government eliminated the power vacuum which had permitted its emergence in the early 1990s. Only the continued isolation of Iran prevented the Kurdish republic from suffering the same fate.

The United States, on the other hand, had been successful thus far in protecting its remaining allies in the Far East against what was admittedly a limited threat. Soviet leaders concluded that in order to preserve the gains which they had made over the course of the decade, it would be necessary both to reinforce their embattled allies in Southwest Asia and to step up the level of pressure on the United States in the Far East.

### **Escalation in Southwest Asia**

The Soviets still refrained from involving themselves directly in Baluchistan, allowing the Afghans to bear the burden of what now seemed to be an increasingly questionable adventure. There was considerable determination in Moscow, however, to prevent the pro-Soviet Democratic Republic of Kurdistan from suffering a similar fate. In the first place, the DRK was much more firmly established than the Baluchis had ever been, having had almost three years of de facto peace, from 1995 to 1997, in which to build its strength. Further, while Pakistan seemed to be gradually on the way to returning to its traditional Western orientation, Soviet analysts still believed--as it turned out, wrongly--that the Tehran regime would remain isolated and impotent for some time to come. A final consideration was that Kurdistan bordered directly on one of the most sensitive regions of the U.S.S.R., the Transcaucasus military district. This made the introduction of Soviet military equipment and personnel into Kurdistan relatively easy and, at the same time, provided a strong incentive to prevent any significant Western operations in the area.

On the 1st of June 1999, the Soviet Union restated its commitment to the continued existence of the DRK, although it carefully avoided making any reference to Kurdish claims to Turkish territory. Over the course of the next two months, substantial numbers of Soviet ground forces were deployed to Kurdistan for the first time. By end of July, Western analysts estimated that three Soviet motorized rifle divisions, as well as elite paratroop and special forces units, were in Kurdistan. At the same time, Soviet force levels along the Soviet-Turkish border were increased substantially. Intelligence reports indicated that of the 12 to 15 mechanized divisions in the Transcaucasus military district which were kept usually at a low level of readiness, three or four were being upgraded to category 1, while as many again were brought up to category 2. The number and readiness of tactical aviation units also was being increased.

In the eyes of both Turkey and the United States, this action constituted a direct threat to Turkey, as well as to the security of the U.S. tactical air units deployed there. On the 15th of July, the American president announced that in response to Turkish requests, and in accordance with U.S. NATO commitments, U.S. ground forces would be deployed to Turkey. By the end of 1999, a full mechanized division, along with one additional armored and two airborne brigades were in Turkey. U.S. tactical air forces in that country, meanwhile, were increased to three full wings. U.S. troops took up defensive positions in eastern Turkey, where their presence enabled Turkish forces to step up their offensive against Kurdish insurgents within Turkey, and to consider for the first time the possibility of cross-border operations.

Although the United States cited its commitment to NATO as one of the motives for the deployment of forces into Turkey, this move was not sanctioned officially by the North Atlantic Council nor endorsed by the individual members of the alliance. While most European states were worried about a major increase of Soviet power in Southwest Asia, with the eventual threat that this implied for the petroleum of the Persian Gulf, their primary concern was to maintain peace and stability in Europe itself. So long as this did not seem to be threatened, there was little chance of any official European government backing for, let alone participation in, any "out-of-area" intervention.

Despite the Europeans' reticence, the United State and its regional allies continued to increase the pressure on Soviet-backed forces in Southwest Asia. In the fall of 1999, the conflict in Baluchistan entered a new phase; Pakistani units began for the first time to attack the base camps of the Baluchi rebels inside Afghanistan. The greater-than-expected success of these missions, and in particular the relative ease with which small Pakistani

units managed to evade Afghan border defenses en route to their targets, sharpened the interest of the U.S. and its Saudi and Egyptian allies in the possibility of recruiting and equipping a new generation of anti-Soviet insurgents from the Afghan refugee population of Pakistan. Not only would the activities of such groups detract from the ability of the Kabul regime to support the Baluchis in Pakistan, it offered the long-term prospect of once again calling into question the Soviet domination of Afghanistan.

As a result of these successful initiatives, the Pakistanis grew steadily less reticent about direct cooperation with the U.S. As the leaders who wielded power in Islamabad became more sophisticated in their geo-strategic analysis, they realized that the chief danger facing Pakistan did not come from the United States, or even India, but rather grew out of the Soviet position in Afghanistan. So long as this was unchallenged, Soviet-backed rebellions in Baluchistan or elsewhere could be a recurring problem. In the spring of the year 2000, secret meetings of representatives of Pakistan, the United States, and Afghan exile groups, began to discuss goals and tactics for future actions in Afghanistan.

At the same time, the United States began providing small amounts of indirect military assistance to the Iranian government. This aid, which was funnelled through Saudi Arabia, consisted chiefly of artillery and antipersonnel weapons, as well as antiaircraft missiles. Saudi advisors were also permitted to help rebuild the Iranian army. Although it would clearly be some time before the Tehran government had a force at its disposal which could face a well-equipped modern army, let alone the forces of the Soviet Union, this assistance was adequate to enable the Iranians to begin attacking the forces of the Kurdish Republic with some measure of success.

A key achievement for U.S. policy was the official linkage of the Turkish and Iranian efforts against the Kurdish rebels. As a result of a secret agreement signed in Ankara on July 27, 1999, the Turkish and Iranian governments agreed to coordinate their military activities in the Kurdish regions. In practice, this meant that Turkish air units began flying in support of Iranian ground operations. The presence of U.S. air units in Turkey made it possible for Turkey to commit its forces to offensive actions, as the Americans ensured the defense of Turkish airspace.

Faced with this combined attack, Kurdish forces began losing ground. While the traditional mountain strongholds of the Kurds were secure, Iranian forces made significant advances in the lowlands to the east, a region inhabited chiefly by a non-Kurdish population. By March of the year 2000, Iranian forces, with substantial support from

Turkish aircraft, were threatening Tabriz, despite the presence of a Soviet mechanized regiment. Despite this threat, the bulk of Soviet forces in Kurdistan were deployed near the Turkish border to guard against large-scale U.S. or Turkish intervention. Soviet fears were not entirely unfounded. Beginning in April, U.S. special forces teams were carrying out sabotage and ambush operations against Soviet forces in Kurdistan. Given such activities, Soviet leaders concluded that it was only a matter of time before all remaining restrictions on U.S. involvement in Kurdistan were dropped.

Intelligence reports of American activities in Pakistan compounded Soviet fears. While the creation of the PRB was understood to be a risky initiative which might well fail, any hint that the Soviet position in Afghanistan might once again be challenged was met with considerable alarm. It was not clear, however, that additional military effort in Southwest Asia would improve the Soviet Union's position. Instead, the risk existed that a clear-cut threat to Pakistan and Iran would commit those countries irrevocably to an alliance with the United States, in effect recreating the barrier of U.S. allies between the U.S.S.R. and the Indian Ocean which had seemingly been breached following the Iranian revolution of 1978 and removed entirely with the isolation of Pakistan after 1992.

#### **War in Korea Leads to General Conflict**

Soviet conclusions regarding the probability of U.S. intervention in Kurdistan and their fears concerning Afghanistan, in fact, were an admission of the failure of Soviet attempts to distract the United States by creating problems in the Far East. Thus far, the U.S. had demonstrated the ability to cope with problems in Taiwan and the Philippines without reducing its efforts in Southwest Asia. Rather than abandon the policy of distraction, however, Soviet planners recommended that it be expanded. If the United States could be made to prosecute a major conflict requiring large deployments of ground troops, as well as aircraft and naval forces, it would become impossible for it to maintain a major presence in Turkey, Soviet officials argued, and might even lead to the scaling down of the U.S. naval presence in the Arabian Sea--thus giving the Baluchi insurgents a new lease on life.

In search of a suitable theater for such an operation, Soviet leaders turned once again to the Far East, where the realignments which had taken place in China and Japan gave the U.S.S.R. an undeniable strategic advantage. The target this time would be the last remaining U.S. ally on the mainland: South Korea. A major attack on South Korea by North Korean and Chinese forces, it was concluded, would almost certainly force the

United States to dedicate a major military effort to the defense of the Seoul regime, thus seriously constraining its ability to act elsewhere. In the unlikely case that the U.S. did not come to South Korea's rescue, pro-Soviet forces would be virtually assured of victory, a success which would certainly compensate for the loss of Kurdistan, if that should occur.

The North Koreans and Chinese, for their part, were only too willing to cooperate. Only lack of Soviet backing had prevented North Korea from staging such an attack in the past, and its level of military preparedness ensured that it could proceed with a massive offensive at any time. In Beijing, an offensive in Korea was favored both as a way to gain a vital position in the struggle with the United States, and also as a potentially devastating blow in China's emerging competition with Japan for supremacy in East Asia. While Japan's relations with Seoul had cooled considerably over the course of the 1990s, the continued existence of South Korea as a buffer state between itself and China was valued by the Japanese. Finally, the Chinese calculated, it was possible that if faced with a major crisis in Korea, the U.S. would relax its guard over Taiwan, which was still Beijing's principal objective.

Although the United States and South Korea had detected signs of increased military activity in North Korea for some weeks, the North Korean attack across the Demilitarized Zone on May 4, 2000 achieved a considerable measure of tactical surprise. This was due in part to the greater-than-expected magnitude of the attack, made possible by the hitherto undetected presence of Chinese forces in North Korea, and to successful infiltration missions carried out by the North Koreans in the days preceding the offensive. Within two days of the original attack, Communist forces had made substantial progress in the eastern sector of the front, and were advancing towards Seoul at an alarming rate. U.S. military analysts concluded, as the Soviets had expected, that only a massive and immediate commitment of U.S. ground and air forces could save Seoul, or at least secure its prompt recapture. Moreover, the unavailability of Japan as a base of operations greatly complicated the military problem faced by the United States. It would be virtually impossible to support major operations of any kind in Korea if existing U.S. positions and support facilities in that country were overrun. Prompt action was therefore essential.

The president and his advisors, however, were wary of accepting such an extensive commitment of forces to Korea. They realized fully the implications that such an action could have on U.S. operations in Southwest Asia and, upon reflection, concluded that such limitations were unacceptable. On the other hand, it was clear that Korea and the U.S. forces present there--the Second Division--could not be abandoned.



Given these considerations, the president resolved on a tactic which the Soviet Union had not anticipated. Only relatively minor reinforcements--two Army and one Marine brigades--were readied for transfer to Korea; but, three days after the initial attack, the president issued a statement which he termed a final warning to North Korea, China, and the Soviet Union. Unless all offensive actions were halted and all troops withdrawn north of the DMZ within 48 hours, the United States would retaliate directly against the aggressors; the threat of nuclear attacks was implied clearly.

At the same time, the United States proceeded to demonstrate that it would not be distracted from the initiatives in Southwest Asia. On May 8th, the day after the president's ultimatum to North Korea and China, the Turko-Iranian cooperation pact, signed the previous summer, was made public, and the Turkish Army launched a full-scale offensive into Iranian Kurdistan. For the first time, U.S. air units went beyond the defense of Turkish airspace and flew missions in support of Turkish forces inside Kurdistan. In a second unprecedented action on the same day, U.S. carrier-based aircraft struck inside Afghanistan in conjunction with a Pakistani attack on a Baluchi training facility. In both cases, U.S. pilots clashed with Soviet aircraft. Although no casualties resulted in the opening days of the operation, these initiatives represented a critical escalation of the level of U.S.-Soviet confrontation, involving as they did the first direct combat between Soviet and American units. U.S. ground forces in Turkey, meanwhile, took up positions directly adjacent to the Turkish-Soviet border.

Despite the clear demonstration of military resolve given by the U.S. in Southwest Asia, it is difficult to know how seriously the implied U.S. nuclear threat in Korea was taken in Moscow and Beijing. It is possible that Soviet and Chinese leaders remembered the reluctance of previous U.S. administrations--most recently in 1992--to risk nuclear escalation even when willing to pursue other types of initiatives. On the other hand, it is possible that the Soviets and Chinese were simply incapable of stopping the North Korean forces, even if they wished to. In any case, the North Korean offensive continued unabated beyond the president's deadline.

On May 9th, U.S. aircraft from bases in South Korea struck 12 targets in North and South Korea with nuclear bombs. Four of the weapons were used to disrupt the North Korean forces threatening Seoul and U.S. forces; eight more were used against military installations in the North, including several in the vicinity of Pyongyang. In addition, U.S.-based B-1 bombers, launched a total of four nuclear-armed cruise missiles against two airfields in Manchuria. The bases struck by the U.S. B-1s housed not only Chinese,

but Soviet, units--a fact known to U.S. military planners, although not acknowledged publicly. Accordingly, the attacks resulted not only in the destruction of Chinese military facilities, but in extensive Soviet casualties. As these attacks were made, the American president once again called on all belligerents to cease fighting, pledging that no further U.S. action would be taken in the Far East if such a course were followed. Significantly, no mention was made of U.S. or Turkish actions in Kurdistan.

In Moscow, these latest demands were seen as a summons to surrender. Soviet leaders concluded that negotiation at this stage would demonstrate weakness and lead to the collapse of the Soviet position worldwide. In any case, the Soviets were not in a position to negotiate on behalf of their allies. The North Korean military initiative had been thoroughly disrupted by the U.S. attack, but the Pyongyang regime survived and vowed to continue the fight.

The Chinese, for their part were now committed fully to war with the United States in Korea and, more importantly, in Taiwan. The principal target for China in the latter theater was the U.S. fleet, which to date had thwarted Chinese efforts to impose a blockade of Taiwan. Following the U.S. strike on Manchurian air bases, Beijing's navy and air force began an all out campaign against the two U.S. carrier battle groups operating off the coast of Taiwan, employing sophisticated conventionally-armed Soviet air- and sea-launched antiship missiles. Although the Chinese suffered extensive casualties in the initial days of this attack, they succeeded in sinking a U.S. destroyer and damaging one of the two carriers.

In such a situation, Soviet leaders concluded, the U.S.S.R. must take action of its own. Thirty-six hours after U.S. attacks, 12 medium-range ballistic missiles armed with nuclear warheads were launched from Siberia against targets in South Korea. These strikes caused extensive U.S. and South Korean casualties, as well as ensuring that the South Korean Army would not be able to take advantage of the earlier U.S. strikes to carry out a major offensive into North Korea. For the time being, the situation in Korea was frozen, as both sides took time to regroup and assess damages. At the same time Soviet submarines in the Western Pacific were heavily reinforced and posed a major threat to U.S. naval ships in the Far East. Indeed, it was considered probable by U.S. naval analysts that several of the attacks on U.S. forces near Taiwan had been carried out by Soviet, not Chinese, submarines.

While these actions were certainly not trivial, the great powers had not yet struck directly at one another; their conflict was still being fought largely through others. Soviet leaders did not lose sight of the fact that the principal goal of the Korean initiative, to prevent the United States from pursuing an aggressive policy in Kurdistan and Afghanistan by tying down U.S. forces in the Far East, had failed, and that the situation in Southwest Asia continued to deteriorate rapidly. To meet this threat, preparations were made to reinforce Soviet forces in Kurdistan and Afghanistan. Beyond this, Soviet leaders felt compelled to respond more directly, offensively, and immediately to the U.S. offensive. Within hours of its nuclear strikes on South Korea, the Soviet Union launched a series of conventional air attacks on U.S. and Turkish air bases and ground forces in eastern Turkey. These attacks resulted in heavy casualties among both the Soviet attackers and the American defenders.

Faced with these losses, as well as those in Korea, the United States, in turn, was faced with the choice between escalation or retreat. Like their Soviet counterparts, U.S. leaders concluded that to yield now would result in a permanent loss of American power and influence worldwide; the consequences of the far less significant retreat from China in 1992 no doubt loomed large in these assessments. Moreover, the Americans believed that the Soviet offensive in Turkey was a final and desperate action; one more demonstration of American resolve it was argued, would cause the U.S.S.R. to back down.

Consequently, all U.S. naval forces in the Pacific and Indian Oceans were ordered to seek out and engage the Soviet Navy. Utilizing conventional ordnance, ground- and carrier-based aircraft began to carry out attacks against air bases on the Chinese mainland. The U.S. also moved to reinforce its forces in the Far East. The tactical wing based in the Philippines was redeployed to Taiwan, and a number of U.S.-based squadrons were ordered to prepare for transfer to East Asia. A carrier task force in the Eastern Pacific was en route to join the two conducting operations near Taiwan.

In Southwest Asia, two U.S. brigades in Turkey joined the offensive into Kurdistan, while Turkish and American air units struck Soviet air bases in Kurdistan and also in the Soviet Transcaucasus. The government of Pakistan, finally, was moved by the dramatic turn taken by events to seek a public rapprochement with the United States, and requested U.S. help against the Afghans and Baluchis. A Marine Amphibious Unit, which had previously been deployed to Oman, was ordered to prepare for redeployment to Pakistan, where it was to be joined by a Marine tactical air wing from the U.S.

With these deployments and attacks on each other's forces, both powers found themselves committed, at the very least, to simultaneous major regional conflicts in Southwest Asia and the Far East. Moreover, with the U.S. attacks on Soviet bases in the Transcaucasus and Soviet attacks on U.S. naval forces in East Asia, the possibility of a general conflict and even strategic nuclear exchange was rising rapidly.

### **The Disposition of Forces in May 2000**

Although fighting was already underway in a number of areas in May 2000, the actual number of U.S. forces abroad was not as great as it had been at times in the past. One infantry division and a tactical air wing were present in Korea, with three additional brigades slated to arrive as reinforcement within weeks. Two full wings of tactical aircraft, but no ground troops were in Taiwan, while another tactical wing was en route to the Philippines. No U.S. troops were present in Japan--including Okinawa--at this time.

In Southwest Asia, the United States had ground forces deployed only in Turkey, consisting of one mechanized division, two airborne brigades, and one additional armored brigade; two special forces battalions and three wings of tactical aircraft completed the U.S. deployment in Turkey. Preparations were underway to reinforce these troops by deploying an armored division and two additional tactical wings to Turkey from the United States.

The U.S. Navy, at this time, maintained a total of 15 carrier battle groups, 13 of which were available in May 2000. Three were in the Arabian Sea; two were off the coast of Taiwan. Of the remainder, two were in the Mediterranean, one was in the western and one in the eastern Pacific, two in the north Atlantic, and two were being fitted out in U.S. ports.

NATO deliberately had not yet increased the readiness of forces in Europe. Nor had the U.S. and its allies begun to mobilize their reserves or defense industries. SAC, the Pacific Command, and Central Command had been placed on full alert just prior to the May 9th attack on Korea and China.

The only unusual deployment of Soviet troops at this time were the forces in Kurdistan, which amounted to three motor rifle divisions plus special forces units, and Afghanistan, where four Soviet divisions had been deployed. Soviet tactical air units were also present in both areas. Soviet submarines and surface forces were beginning to deploy away from their bases in much larger numbers than usual. As usual, 15 divisions were present in the Soviet Transcaucasus military district, and the readiness of these forces had

been advanced. Soviet leaders ordered a general mobilization immediately following the U.S. attack on Korea and China, but little had yet been accomplished. Chinese forces, fewer in number but much better equipped than those available in the 1980s were reaching full mobilization.

## **VIII. SCENARIO EPSILON: U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT IN A FOUR-POWER WORLD**

This scenario examines the possibility of a U.S.-Soviet war taking place in the first decade of the twenty-first century. At that time, the United States, which has followed an isolationist course for much of the preceding decade, is drawn into a building conflict between the Soviet Union and the nations of East Asia, led by China. War is precipitated by the Soviet decision to carry out a preemptive attack on U.S. space-based strategic defense systems in conjunction with a conventional attack against China.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The late 1980s and early 1990s were marked by a serious deterioration in relations between the United States and its principal allies stemming from economic disputes and an increasingly divergent strategic vision. Matters came to a crisis in 1992 when an unexpected Arab-Israeli war led first to the use of nuclear weapons by Israel and then to a retaliatory strike against Israel by the Soviet Union. Perceived American inaction during this crisis convinced a number of key allies that the U.S. was no longer in a position to offer a reliable military guarantee, and that the security interests of Europe in particular would better be served by an independent policy.

In the United States, this near-nuclear confrontation tipped the scales of the ongoing political debate in favor of a crash program aimed at deploying a comprehensive strategic defense system within a decade. Due to severe budgetary pressures, the great cost of this program was largely made up by cuts in other portions of the defense budget, resulting in a serious degrading of conventional military strength. U.S. troops were withdrawn from all foreign deployments over the course of the early 1990s.

During this time, the Soviet Union also found it necessary to take a less active role in international affairs, due to the persistence of serious economic problems within the U.S.S.R. and mounting opposition to Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. Not until the

last years of the century did Soviet leaders once again have the resources to pursue new international initiatives.

As a result of the relative eclipse of both great powers, the nations of East Asia and Western Europe gained considerable maneuvering room during the 1990s. European policy evolved towards a cordial but distant relationship with the U.S. and increasing economic interdependence with the Soviet Union. In Asia, by contrast, the leading regional powers were drawn into conflict with the Soviet Union as a result of the activities of Soviet allies in the area, Vietnam and North Korea.

After the year 2000, a change of administration in the United States led the country to resume a more outward-looking attitude. The coincidence of this shift with renewed Soviet aggression was the cause of a series of indirect conflicts between the two great powers. A direct clash between them resulted initially from a Sino-American intervention aimed at restraining Vietnam's aggressive behavior towards Thailand. Soviet forces were dispatched to aid the Vietnamese war effort, and U.S.-Soviet aerial clashes followed.

The escalation of the situation in the Far East came about largely as a result of mounting Soviet fears concerning China's motives and capabilities. Soviet attempts to relieve pressure on Southeast Asia by shifting the scene of confrontation to Korea resulted only in reciprocal pressure being put on North Korea by China and the United States. In the end, Soviet leaders concluded that only by eliminating China as an aggressive power could their position in the Far East be secured.

While Soviet confidence of victory at the conventional level in a war with China was high, considerable uncertainty remained as to whether the Chinese would turn to strategic nuclear weapons, and what role might be played by the United States in such a case. Taking the evolving Sino-American relationship into consideration, Moscow could not rule out the intervention of American nuclear forces--all the more as the newly-deployed strategic defense system gave the United States a measure of security against possible Soviet retaliation. Accordingly, the Soviet Union chose to attempt a preemptive attack on the orbiting components of the American strategic defense system, hoping thereby to dissuade the United States from employing its strategic offensive arsenal.

The principal events leading up to the confrontation in 2005 are set out in the chronology below.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1987-90 Renewed U.S. funding for Nicaraguan "Contras."
- 1988 South Korean security crackdown prior to Seoul Olympic games fails to prevent a rash of protests throughout the summer.  
South Korean President Chung forced to resign due to the army's dissatisfaction of his handling of the summer protests; de facto military government imposed in Seoul; U.S.-South Korean relations deteriorate.
- 1990-95 Serious economic problems in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; Considerable unrest in Eastern Europe.
- 1990 "Contras" gain control of Managua; Sandinista leaders and remaining armed forces resume guerrilla resistance.
- 1991-92 Differences over U.S. Central American policy exacerbate U.S.-European disagreements. Massive Vietnamese offensive against insurgent forces in Kampuchea; Sino-Vietnamese border incidents; U.S. fails to respond to Chinese requests for joint intervention.
- 1991 U.S. announces pull-out of 100,000 troops from Europe.
- 1992 Israeli attack on Syria leads to Israel's use of nuclear weapons; Soviets respond with nuclear strike against Israel; lack of U.S. response largely discredits American nuclear guarantee.  
Post-war settlement in the Middle East leads to the loss by Israel of territories occupied since 1967.  
U.S. elections lead to decision to deploy strategic defenses within a decade; large cuts in other portions of the defense budget follow.
- 1992-95 All U.S. troops withdrawn from Europe; revived Western European Union becomes the chief instrument for security cooperation in Europe; increased East-West economic ties in Europe.
- 1995 China, Japan, and other East Asian countries form the East Asian Economic and Security Community (EAESC) as a means of resisting Soviet pressure in the Far East.
- 1992-96 All U.S. troops withdrawn from Asia.
- 1998 Disintegration of the Republic of South Africa into a number of white-ruled enclaves under attack by growing black nationalist forces; renewed Soviet activity in southern Africa.  
Renewal of Soviet-backed insurgency in the Philippines.
- 2000 New U.S. administration adopts more outward-looking policy.
- 2001 U.S. agrees to give counterinsurgency assistance in return for renewed access to Philippine bases.
- 2002 U.S. intelligence evidence of impending major Soviet military moves in southern Africa.
- 2003 White government in Pretoria explodes a nuclear device, and warns that it will use more if attacks against it do not stop.  
U.S. launches diplomatic initiative in South Africa; offers to guarantee white enclaves while negotiations are ongoing.  
Black nationalist attacks against U.S.-guaranteed areas lead to U.S. military intervention; tactical air and special forces deployed to South Africa.  
Numerous Vietnamese incursions into Thailand as a result of increasing Kampuchean insurgency; U.S. and EAESC agree to support Thailand and put direct pressure on Vietnam.
- 2004 U.S. tactical aircraft deployed to Thailand and the Philippines and clash with Vietnamese and Soviets over Thailand and the South China Sea; renewed fighting on the Sino-Vietnamese border Soviet troops deployed to North Korea in an attempt to relieve pressure on Vietnam by diverting China's attention northward; China and the U.S. guarantee the security of South Korea.
- 2005 U.S. tactical wing deployed to South Korea as sign of U.S. commitment; large numbers of Chinese forces moved to the North Korean Border.  
Chinese offensive against Vietnam captures key border positions South Korea carries out covert operations against North Korea; increasing instability in North Korea Soviets, concluding that drastic action is necessary, launch major ground attack against China. In



hope of forestalling a U.S. nuclear response, the U.S.S.R. attacks orbiting components of the newly-deployed U.S. strategic defense system.

## **THE ORIGINS OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE, 1989-1992**

While no direct confrontations took place between the great powers in the late 1980s and the first years of the new decade, a number of developments which occurred, or at least began, in this period led to profound changes in the relationship of the powers to each other and to the rest of the world. Both the United States and the Soviet Union experienced difficulties in dealing with their respective allies, as well as unexpected, if minor, reverses in third world initiatives. When a great power confrontation did occur, as a result of an unanticipated conflict in the Middle East in 1992, the trend towards the isolation of the powers was given a critical boost.

### **The U.S. and its Allies, Sources of Growing Tension**

The administration which took power in Washington in 1989 was committed to continuing the policies of its predecessor, particularly in foreign and security policies. Although hampered by budgetary constraints, real defense spending continued to increase and the major procurement and organizational initiatives undertaken during the Reagan administration were continued. Priority continued to go to the on-going modernization of strategic nuclear forces--mobile ICBMs, Trident-II SLBMs, the advanced technology bomber, and advanced cruise missiles--and to the rapidly expanding strategic defense research and development program.

At the same time, the new administration pursued actively a number of foreign policy initiatives begun earlier in the 1980s. The new president's top priority, to an even greater extent than his predecessor, was the struggle between the U.S. and the Soviet Union for influence in the third world. Programs to implement the so-called Reagan Doctrine, which held that the U.S. should seek out and support insurgent groups opposing pro-Soviet third world governments, were endorsed and expanded by the new administration.

### **Partial U.S. Victory in Nicaragua**

Central America, as before, was the most important test of this policy. The continued existence of a pro-Soviet government in Nicaragua was perceived in Washington both as a significant threat to U.S. national interests, and as an opportunity to inflict a public defeat on the Soviet Union by taking advantage of the overwhelming local military

and political advantages enjoyed by the United States in an area so near its own borders. The president, however, was well aware of the potential dangers and uncertainties involved in the actual use of American troops in the situation. His administration, therefore, continued the policy of supporting locally recruited anti-Sandinista forces with funds, supplies, and advice.

After 1988, the scale of U.S. assistance to the "Contras" increased considerably. This change was due in part to priorities of the new president, but it was made possible largely by the improved military record of the insurgents themselves. Beginning in 1987, renewed U.S. assistance and internal reorganization had enabled the rebels to begin large-scale operations within Nicaragua. By 1988, they controlled considerable amounts of territory in the rural and uninhabited areas near Nicaragua's northern border and in the areas along the country's Atlantic coastline.

To contest control of the major urban areas of Nicaragua, however, the "Contras" would require previously unavailable heavy weapons. Beginning in 1989, the United States began supplying the "Contras" with these military requirements. The insurgents' most pressing need was for air defense systems to counteract the threat from Managua's Soviet-supplied helicopters and ground-attack aircraft. The acquisition of U.S. mobile ground-to-air missile systems made it possible for the first time for the "Contras" to concentrate significant forces in open areas. By 1990, the "Contras" were also receiving U.S. armored vehicles and artillery, and were beginning to challenge battalion-sized Sandinista units in open combat.

By the Autumn of 1990, the Sandinista regime was clearly in serious trouble. Its popular support, which had remained strong throughout the early stages of the civil war, crumbled as physical and economic hardships increased. In addition to the growing military threat posed by the "Contras," the regime in Managua also faced increased economic problems, in large part caused by the war. Military operations consumed an ever-increasing portion of its budget--even with Soviet aid--while rebel control of large portions of Nicaragua's agricultural areas and, more importantly, the "Contras" growing ability to interdict key internal communication links made it difficult for supplies to reach Managua and other urban centers. Finally, it was becoming increasingly clear in Managua that the Soviet Union would not step in to save the regime by committing Soviet, or even Cuban, troops to combat.

The U.S. government, well aware of the situation in Managua, began an intensive diplomatic campaign to "persuade" the Sandinistas to abandon power voluntarily, thus avoiding a potentially bloody military showdown. Although the U.S. was confident that its allies would prevail in this confrontation, should it take place, the president and his advisors were anxious to avoid the negative political reactions, both domestic and international, that might follow such a development. The Sandinistas' reaction surprised the planners in Washington, however. Rather than accept a negotiated surrender or hold out to the last in Managua, the top Sandinista leaders announced that, faced with imperialist aggression, it was time to resume the "people's war." Sandinista leaders, along with a large part of the remaining army, left the capital and dispersed into the countryside, from which they prepared to resume a guerrilla campaign against its U.S.-backed opponents.

This unexpected development had both positive and negative aspects for U.S. policy. In the short term, it enabled U.S.-backed forces to occupy Managua and set up a government with relatively little resistance in the summer of 1990. In the months that followed, however, it became clear that the struggle against Soviet influence and destabilization in Central America, far from having been brought to a successful conclusion, had merely entered a new phase.

Not only did left-wing insurgency once again become endemic in Nicaragua, but the dispersal of the Sandinista leadership contributed to the resurgence of armed leftist opposition in other Central American countries. Honduras and El Salvador were hardest hit, but by the end of 1991, anti-government insurgencies of varying degrees of severity were underway in all Central American countries with the exception of Costa Rica. This renewed rise in armed opposition hastened the resurgence of the military as a political force in most Central American countries, effectively destroying the fragile democratic regimes created in the 1980s in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. While all of these governments remained closely allied to the U.S., these relationships became more of a diplomatic burden for Washington as repression and human rights violations in Central America became more common and well publicized.

Public and official opinion in Western Europe was especially critical. This was due in part to the long-standing differences between the U.S. and its European allies over Washington's Central American policies, disagreements which were exacerbated in the late 1980s by a general political shift to the left in major countries of Western Europe. The last years of the decade saw electoral victories for the British Labour Party, the West German Social Democrats, and the French Socialists. Left-of-center parties also held power in

Spain, Italy, and Greece. While all of these parties and governments had long since lost any sympathy for the Sandinistas of Nicaragua, they could not but oppose the increasingly repressive right-wing regimes which had reappeared in Central America, and in consequence were extremely critical of the U.S. policy which kept those regimes in power.

### **U.S.-European Difficulties**

Differences with the U.S. concerning Central America, however, were only one symptom of a deeper split which was appearing between the Europeans and the United States in the years immediately preceding 1992. At the heart of this growing division was a fundamental difference of opinion about the proper posture to maintain vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. While the United States saw the East-West relationship as necessarily confrontational, and believed that all aspects of its foreign policy should reflect the need to oppose Soviet interests and thwart Soviet initiatives, the Europeans were willing increasingly to accept the Soviet Union as a legitimate international actor and a co-equal partner, and sought privately to work out a framework for long-term coexistence.

This fundamental difference in outlook was reflected in NATO doctrine and defense policy, arms control, and East-West trade. The first two issues, of course, were closely linked and were in turn connected to the resurgent European anti-nuclear movement, which strongly influenced a number of parties in power by 1992--most importantly Labour and the SPD. Lack of any progress in U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiations and the effective abandonment of the ABM treaty by the early 1990s, were cited in London and Bonn as cause to oppose any increase or modernization of U.S. nuclear forces in Europe and to call instead for the withdrawal of many existing systems. The new Socialist president of France, unlike Mr. Mitterand, his predecessor, did not back the U.S. position actively, which amounted to a tacit endorsement of British and German demands.

At the same time, all of Europe was suffering from a renewed economic slump--a condition which was in large part responsible for the political success of the left-wing parties. Largely as a result of economic difficulties, spending on defense by European nations underwent a significant real decline throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, causing disruption of NATO's plans to modernize conventional forces and placing an increasing share of the burden of European defense on U.S. forces. Not surprisingly, these developments gave rise to criticism and considerable resentment in Washington, and even more vociferously in the nation as a whole. Although the administration reaffirmed its commitment to NATO and the defense of Europe, the president and other high U.S.

officials were increasingly critical of the policies and pronouncements of the various European governments. Outside the administration, a growing number of public figures, including many from the president's own party, were calling for a reassessment of U.S. commitments abroad in general, and in Europe in particular.

To the problems of arms control and burden sharing were added U.S.-European differences on trade and economic issues. The specific issue of East-West trade was an important part of this problem, as the West Germans particularly looked to exports to the east as means of reviving their depressed industrial sector. In Washington, however, any arrangement beneficial to the Soviet Union was automatically suspect, since it was held that a stronger economy would only lead the U.S.S.R. to put forth a more formidable military effort. In Europe, on the other hand, key leaders were of the opinion that the establishment of increasingly important economic ties with the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe would lead to a more stable environment, a general lessening of tension, and reduction of the risk of war. Although the recession, which gripped Eastern Europe even more tightly than it did the West, ensured that the actual volume of trade with the East would remain relatively small in the near term, the political importance and symbolic value of this issue was greater for European governments than was generally recognized by American decision makers.

*The loss of competitiveness of European agriculture and industry was at the heart of the more general economic differences between Europe and the United States. The subsidization and other export-promotion programs undertaken by the European Communities and by the various European nations were attacked bitterly in the United States--which was still running a serious trade deficit of its own--as unfair trading practices; fueling anti-European sentiment in the U.S. European governments, on the other hand, pointed to U.S. fiscal and monetary policies as the principal causes of Europe's problems and reacted to U.S. economic sanctions by reducing security cooperation even further.*

By 1991, even the president was prepared to reassess the U.S. position in Europe. A plan was proposed by the administration to reduce gradually the number of U.S. troops in Europe, with 100,000 men to be withdrawn by the year 2000. These cuts, as originally announced, would be made by increasing the number of units based in the U.S., but assigned to Europe with duplicate equipment sets on the continent. Although this proposal was met with reservations by NATO military leaders, it was adopted by the Atlantic Council in December 1991.

## The Beginnings of Realignment in Asia

While relations between the United States and its European allies were going through this rather difficult period, problems were also brewing for the U.S. in Asia. The initial focal point of these difficulties was South Korea, where the U.S.-backed government of President Chung Doo Whan faced growing opposition in the late 1980s.

Political tensions in South Korea reached a breaking point in the summer of 1988 with a series of confrontations precipitated by the government's security crack-down preceding the Seoul Olympic Games. The government's moves in the months preceding the opening of the Games, which included rounding up and detaining all known opposition figures and increasing the overt presence of security forces in Seoul and other major cities, were intended to deter any outbreak of trouble during the Games. Unfortunately, they had just the opposite effect. The harsh security measures swelled the ranks of the opposition, while the removal of respected moderate opposition leaders opened the way for the rise of a new generation of more radical leaders. Considerable violence followed, culminating in a series of spectacular and widely publicized clashes during the Games themselves.

President Chung's power and prestige were dealt a fatal blow by these events, and the announcement of his retirement, in October 1988, was generally understood to have been insisted upon by the South Korean armed forces. In an unprecedented move, the new president remained an active member of the South Korean Army; his accession to power marked the beginning of open military rule in South Korea. The process of constitutional reform, which had been pursued timidly at best by President Chung, was shelved, and the crack-down against opposition forces pursued with increased efficiency. At the same time, the military government moved to improve its popular standing by making a strong appeal to Korean nationalist sentiments. North Korean agents and agitators were blamed (not entirely without basis) for the recent round of violent confrontations, and all South Koreans were urged to unite behind the goal of national reunification--by force if necessary.

The positions taken by the South Korean government also contained a distinct strain of anti-Americanism. In part this was a reflection of the government's public campaign toward national self-reliance and solidarity. Privately, however, South Korean military and economic leaders felt that more serious differences of interest existed between the United States and South Korea. On the military side, continuing control of Korean forces by U.S. commanders was seen increasingly as an intolerable interference with Korean sovereignty, all the more as friction between the two countries gave rise to doubts among Korean commanders as to the true long-term value of the U.S. alliance.

Korea's powerful business and industrial leaders also felt that they had reason to be displeased. U.S. trade policy, driven by the persistent U.S. trade deficit with the nations of East Asia, had grown steadily more restrictive, dealing a serious blow to Korea's export-oriented economy. Although South Korea could do little in the way of direct retaliation for this trend, economic discontent added to the growing disenchantment with Korean-American relations.

While trade problems were also cited by the American side as hindering smooth U.S.-Korean relations, security issues were undeniably of greater importance to the U.S. Government. In the short term, this worked in favor of continued close ties with South Korea, as the U.S. did not wish to jeopardize its military position in the peninsula which was judged to be critical to containing Soviet expansionism in East Asia. South Korea's drive towards greater military self-sufficiency was well received in Washington, where it was contrasted with the interminable debates over NATO burden sharing. Over the longer term, however, U.S. military leaders were concerned that the growing wave of militant nationalism in South Korea would lead to regional instability by triggering a North Korean reaction. This gave force to the position taken by a number of U.S. political and military leaders who warned that the open-ended commitment of the United States to the defense of South Korea risked involving the U.S. in a major conflict, while providing little in the way of added security.

U.S. relations with Japan were also undergoing a period of mutual reevaluation at this time. As was the case with Korea, both economic and political issues were involved. By the early 1990s, the economic differences between the United States and Japan concerned not so much Japanese exports to the U.S. as competition between the two countries in third country markets, of which the People's Republic of China was among the most important. As time passed, moreover, Japanese leaders began to assert larger claims to political, as well as economic, power in Asia. Here too, China was a key target. From the late 1980s onwards, rapprochement with Beijing was a constant goal of Japanese foreign policy.

The Chinese, for their part, were relatively well disposed towards this Japanese initiative. The new generation of leaders which wielded power in China following the death of Deng Xiaoping, in 1989, wished to moderate and control China's "opening to the West," which they perceived to be threatening social stability and potentially dangerous to their hold on China's population. On the other hand, they understood the need for continued infusions of foreign capital and technology to continue the expansion of China's

economy. Cooperation with Japan seemed to offer a means of ensuring a more balanced foreign and economic policy.

In the early 1990s, however, the attention of China's leaders returned to military and security issues. The immediate cause was a renewed rise in tension between China and Vietnam, which included skirmishes along the two countries' border as well as increased conflict between Vietnam and Chinese-backed insurgents in Kampuchea and Laos. Behind this, however, lay a new deterioration in relations between Beijing and Moscow. After a brief attempt to improve relations with China in the first part of Mr. Gorbachev's tenure as Soviet General Secretary, which had led to few concrete results, the Soviet Union returned to a harder line in the early 1990s. The key goal of this policy was to secure once and for all the positions in Laos, Kampuchea, and Afghanistan which the Soviets and their Vietnamese allies had been struggling to gain for over a decade.

The final pacification of Afghanistan--which was accomplished despite U.S. attempts to supply insurgents with sophisticated weapons--concerned China only indirectly. Successful operations in Southeast Asia, however, required that China be neutralized. The Sino-Vietnamese incidents of late 1991 and early 1992 resulted directly from the the operations against insurgents in Laos and Kampuchea. Vietnamese military operations of unprecedented magnitude were carried out in the dry seasons of 1991 and 1992 and resulted in the virtual destruction of cohesive armed opposition to the Vietnamese-backed government of the two countries. At the same time, Vietnam deliberately provoked incidents on its border with China. These actions, which coincided with the deployment of unusually large numbers of Soviet air and naval units in Vietnam and major Soviet maneuvers on the Manchurian border, were a clear warning to China of the risks of interfering in any way with ongoing operations in Southeast Asia.

As might be expected, China's leaders were highly disturbed to find themselves in such a situation. Discreet enquiries were made in Washington to ascertain how far the U.S. might be willing to back Chinese resistance to this latest Soviet move. The response from U.S. leaders, however, was extremely guarded and, in the end, negative. Its attention firmly focused on Central America, the U.S. Government had no intention of becoming involved in what seemed to be a lost cause in Southeast Asia, even in support of China. In reaching what seemed to be a rational conclusion on this issue, however, U.S. leaders gravely underestimated the long-term impact of this refusal on Sino-American relations. The lack of U.S. support in China's self-perceived hour of need boosted the position of those Chinese leaders who had been calling for China to reassess its



relationship with the United States and strive for a more independent and self-reliant foreign policy.

Each for reasons of its own, the nations of East Asia, thus, were moving away from close relations with the United States. At the same time, there was growing interest in intra-Asian greater security cooperation. China and South Korea, as well as Japan, had reason to be wary of actual and potential Soviet threats to their security; closer ties with each other offered a possibility of meeting this threat while still distancing themselves from the United States. Although all sides took care to limit their disagreements and avoided any action or statement which would call into question the fundamental relationship between the U.S. and the Asian countries, the groundwork was laid for just such a split to take place when an unexpected shift in the international environment put further strains on the relations between the United States and all of its allies.

### **Economic and Political Problems in the U.S.S.R.**

Its aggressive behavior in the Far East notwithstanding, the Soviet Union also found its ability to engage in extensive initiatives restricted by a number of problems in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Chief among these were relations with Moscow's East European allies and the unsatisfactory performance of the Soviet economy.

The economic reforms introduced in the late 1980s by General Secretary Gorbachev were expected by some outside observers to improve Soviet economic productivity significantly, but failed to live up to these initial expectations due to unsolved systemic problems in the Soviet economy. By limiting possible decentralization and hindering innovation, the bureaucratic weight of the Soviet system made rapid economic improvement impossible. While the Soviet economy did not deteriorate further, therefore, the results anticipated from Mr. Gorbachev's reforms appeared only slowly.

As a result, the high levels of military spending considered necessary by Kremlin leaders continued to absorb an ever-growing share of Soviet production at the expense of industrial investment and technological development--not to mention consumer goods. Only the hard-currency income from the sale of energy products to Europe, and arms to selected nations in the Middle East and South Asia, made it possible for the Soviet economy to expand at all. This income allowed the Soviet Union to purchase from abroad a portion of the industrial technology which it was not developing for itself, although at a rate which virtually guaranteed that Soviet productive technology would continue to lag behind that of the West for years to come.

Similar economic problems plagued the nations of Eastern Europe, and combined with long-standing popular dissatisfactions to lead to a new wave of unrest in the early 1990s. Although this renewed opposition to pro-Soviet regimes, which was manifest throughout Eastern Europe with the exception of traditionally pro-Russian Bulgaria and relatively wealthy Hungary, never reached the level of the 1980 Polish crisis, the potential for trouble in Eastern Europe was very much on the minds of Soviet leaders at this time. As a result a great deal of attention in Soviet military planning continued to be devoted to security contingencies in Eastern Europe, rather than to aggressive initiatives elsewhere in the world.

It does not follow that Soviet leaders lost interest in the rest of the world, or that they intentionally diminished their efforts to spread Soviet influence. The conditions in which they found themselves, however, dictated a shift in tactics. The need to concentrate the bulk of available military resources on the strategic build-up and on possible East European contingencies, led to a reassessment of the U.S.S.R.'s third world commitments. In areas such as Afghanistan and Kampuchea, where a determined military effort might be hoped to overcome resistance, it was decided to step up operations in order to liquidate the problem once and for all. In areas such as Central America and southern Africa, however, Soviet leaders chose to limit their involvement to indirect support for friendly governments and sub-national groups and made it clear that even in the case of reverses, such as was encountered in Nicaragua, the use of Soviet troops would not be considered in the foreseeable future.

### **Confrontation in the Middle East**

Neither great power set out to provoke a confrontation in 1992. By the end of that year, however, unexpected developments in the Middle East brought the powers closer to war than they had been in many decades and led to the first use of nuclear weapons in nearly fifty years.

The crisis grew out of the unending confrontation between Israel and Syria, which flared into war in March 1992. Although the two countries had been increasing their military preparations and exchanging threats and warnings of growing magnitude for over a year before the outbreak of war, their respective great power allies expected no such development at this time.

The roots of this confrontation, of course, went far back into the troubled history of Arab-Israeli relations, which had taken a distinct turn for the worst in the late 1980s. The

failure of a series of U.S.-sponsored attempts to bring about a "detente" between Israel and Jordan had been followed by a rapprochement between Jordan and Syria. At the same time, the more moderate sections of the Palestinian movement, deprived of Jordanian support, were eclipsed by radical pro-Syrian factions.

Meanwhile, the moderate Arab states, of whom Egypt and Saudi Arabia were the most important, were encountering serious difficulties. In part these were due to the economic problems which followed the decline in oil prices in 1986. A larger problem, however, was caused by the continued growth of fundamentalist Islamic forces in these countries. As a result of this political evolution, overt alliance between ostensibly Islamic governments and the United States became increasingly more difficult. Adopting a hard line against Israel, at least rhetorically, was one way to counter criticism from the Islamic right wing, and both the Egyptian and Saudi governments found it expedient to follow this policy. In more concrete terms, the new policies translated into increasing subsidies from Saudi Arabia to Syria and, to a lesser extent, Jordan, and the near total elimination of any visible U.S. military presence in Egypt. In early 1991, the Egyptian president issued a statement to the effect that he "would never consider abandoning his Arab brethren," if the latter were attacked by Israel--a statement which was widely understood to cast a serious doubt over Egypt's eventual respect of the official peace between itself and Israel.

There was also considerable concern over the political evolution of Israel, where right wing forces had been gaining increasing power ever since the early-1980s. Former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon became prime minister in 1989, giving control of the decision-making apparatus to those elements in the Israeli government and military which favored a military solution to the nation's outstanding problems.

American analysts still believed that, unless provoked, Israel would not jeopardize its relationship with the United States by initiating a purely aggressive war. Israel's chief Arab opponents, for their part, were also expected to avoid confrontation, although the U.S. assessment of the longer-term evolution of policy in these countries was becoming increasingly worrisome. Syria, in particular, while continuing the expansion and modernization of its armed forces which had been underway without interruption since the 1982 confrontation with Israel in Lebanon, was thought to have its hands full with internal political problems and the problem of maintaining control over tumultuous Lebanon. While war was considered almost inevitable eventually, therefore, few observers expected it to break out soon.

The factor which precipitated hostilities was the sudden death of Syrian President Assad. Top Israeli leaders, who had been gravely concerned for some time about the Syrian military build-up, concluded that this was a perhaps unique opportunity to take preemptive action against Syria. In the period of instability associated with the leadership transition, they believed, that a surprise attack by Israeli forces would stand a good chance of destroying Syria's military potential in a brief campaign. The leaders in Jerusalem realized that there was little or no hope of obtaining U.S. backing for such a move. They concluded, however, that after the fact, Washington would have no option but to rally behind the Israeli initiative--all the more so as it would bring about the defeat of Syria, a country considered by Washington as the Soviet Union's most dangerous ally in the Middle East.

The Israeli attack which was launched on March 15, 1992, achieved a considerable degree of tactical surprise. It did not, however, succeed in breaking through Syrian positions on the Golan Heights or in Lebanon. The sophisticated network of defenses which had been established by Syria over the previous decade, especially positions equipped with anti-air and antiarmor missiles, inflicted casualties on the attacking air and ground forces without precedent in Israel's prior military experience. Further, within hours of the initial attack, Jordan joined the fighting by sending forces to reinforce Syrian positions on the Golan. More ominously for Israel, the government of Egypt announced that unless all hostilities were brought to a close within 24 hours, it would consider its peace treaty with Israel to be void, and would feel free to contribute to the Arab war effort. Although it was considered doubtful that Egypt could mobilize its forces quickly enough to take part in the ongoing fighting, the strategic implications of this shift were ominous for Israel.

Israel's near-term problems were already severe. The unexpectedly high level of casualties in the initial days of the conflict increased the inherent numerical advantage enjoyed by its opponents. By March 20th, five days after the initial outbreak of fighting, Syrian and Jordanian forces had assumed the offensive and were driving towards the pre-war borders of Israel. Further, there was no military reason to believe that they could be stopped even there. The threat of an invasion of Israel itself, within the pre-1967 boundaries, suddenly loomed.

In this extremity, Israel turned to the U.S. for assistance. The reaction in Washington, while not entirely unfavorable, was not all that Jerusalem might have wished. While U.S. leaders stated publicly that they would not stand by and allow the destruction

of the state of Israel, they were much less definite when asked how exactly they planned to prevent this. Adding to Israel's problems was the openly hostile attitude taken by the West Europeans. In a joint statement issued on March 18th the heads of state of the members of the European Communities made it clear that they would not allow U.S. military equipment stockpiled in Europe to be transferred to Israel, nor would they permit arms shipments from the United States to transit through their countries.

Faced with this situation, U.S. decision makers informed Israeli representatives that the United States would be unable to provide the kind of prompt and massive military assistance which might suffice to reverse the tactical situation, and accordingly, that the United States could only try to bring about a diplomatic solution. That such a solution would certainly be unfavorable to Israel, likely leading to the loss of most or all of the territory occupied since 1967, was well understood in Washington. Given the position in which the Israelis had placed themselves, however, it was held to be unavoidable. In private, American leaders made it clear that they were appalled at Israel's decision to initiate hostilities. The president flatly ruled out the possible use of U.S. forces in the Middle East in a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Sharon.

On the diplomatic front, the United States was considerably more active. As in previous Middle East wars, it soon became apparent that the great powers had a common interest in forcing a halt to hostilities, and preparations were soon underway for a joint U.S-Soviet diplomatic initiative to bring about a cease-fire. These plans did not take into account the increasingly desperate decision making environment in Jerusalem, however. Rather than submit to a humiliating and politically disastrous peace, Israeli leaders were prepared to escalate the conflict in an unprecedented manner. On March 23rd, without consulting with or warning any foreign power, Israel detonated two nuclear weapons against Syrian troop concentrations--one in southern Lebanon and the other on the Golan Heights--which were deemed to pose the greatest threat to Israeli forces. Within minutes of these strikes, the Israeli government announced that it possessed "a large number" of additional nuclear devices, and that if all Arab forces did not retreat from Israeli territory--which was specifically defined to include the West Bank and the Golan--within 12 hours, nuclear attacks would be launched against Arab cities.

This stunning development brought swift responses from all parties involved. Publicly, Israel's Arab enemies vowed to fight a war of revenge, not stopping until the state of Israel was entirely obliterated. Privately, however, Syria realized its peril all too well. It was generally agreed that Israel had additional nuclear weapons at its disposal and,

given the record of aggressive behavior compiled by its leaders in the previous week, a further nuclear attack was considered likely. Only a response in kind, the Syrians concluded, could meet this threat. Lacking nuclear weapons themselves, the Syrians turned to their Soviet allies.

The reaction of the Soviet Union to this request was based on a fundamental misconception. It was considered impossible in Moscow that Israel could have employed nuclear weapons without explicit approval--and in all likelihood active cooperation--from the United States. Accordingly, Soviet leaders were inclined to treat the matter no longer as a Middle Eastern problem but as a thinly veiled great power confrontation. In such a context, the need for Soviet response was clear. Ten hours after the Israeli strikes, and two hours before Jerusalem's ultimatum was due to expire, two SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles were launched from the southern Soviet Union against targets in Israel. One of these hit the air base in the Negev Desert from which the Israeli strikes were believed to have been launched; collateral damage from this strike was accordingly minimal. The second, however, its target not clear, struck just outside of Tel Aviv and caused extensive civilian casualties. Soviet public statements made it clear that they considered the United States to be the true culprit in the affair, and that in case of further Israeli aggression, reprisals against the United States could not be ruled out. Western intelligence reports confirmed that all Soviet strategic forces had been put on an unprecedented level of alert, one from which a decision to launch a massive nuclear strike on the United States was technically possible on a few minutes notice. The U.S. president decided not to contest the situation.

The short-term military situation was defused fairly quickly, but to do this the U.S. was forced to take a number of humiliating steps. The first was not to respond militarily to the Soviet challenge. The second was to convince the Soviets that the Israelis had indeed acted unilaterally and without prior American knowledge--in effect admitting to a major failure of U.S. intelligence. Finally, the United States was forced to apply public pressure on the Israeli government to accept an immediate end to hostilities, even at the price of a highly unfavorable peace settlement.

As it turned out, the local arrangements in the Middle East were carried out in a less radical manner than might have been expected. All sides were so profoundly shocked at the sudden eruption of nuclear conflict that, in the immediate aftermath, they made a genuine effort to find a solution which would ensure against its recurrence. In the end, Israel lost most of the territory acquired in 1967, liquidating the major political problem

separating Israel from the moderate Arab states. Moreover, Israel's now openly acknowledged possession of nuclear weapons acted as a powerful deterrent for even the most radical of its remaining enemies. Syria, for its part, underwent a period of considerable internal turmoil following the war, as various military and ethnic factions contended for power.

Of greater importance for the larger international picture was the perception of, and reaction to, these events in the rest of the world. In the United States, the public debate soon focused almost exclusively on the moment of U.S.-Soviet nuclear confrontation; the particular circumstances of the Middle East war which led up to it were virtually ignored. The salient "fact" which was uppermost in the public and political mind was that a Soviet nuclear threat had reduced the United States to a position of military impotence. The significance of this observation, and the steps to be taken in order to prevent its recurrence became the dominant issues of the 1992 presidential election campaign.

Out of this political and strategic debate came a significant shift in U.S. global strategy. The successful candidate for the presidency, who unseated an incumbent of his own party, held that absolute priority in military planning must be given to the strategic nuclear competition with the Soviet Union. Recent events had shown, the president-elect argued, that so long as the nation was susceptible to "nuclear blackmail," any other military options became irrelevant. To remedy this situation, the new president ordered an acceleration of the on-going Strategic Defense Initiative and set forth the goal of deploying a comprehensive system of strategic defenses, within the decade. At the same time, further modernization and expansion of U.S. strategic offensive forces would be undertaken, with a strong emphasis on survivability and counter-force capabilities. Due to the considerable expense involved in carrying out these projects, other aspects of U.S. military plans would be cut sharply. In particular most deployments of U.S. troops abroad would be curtailed sharply, especially in Europe.

This last step was motivated by more than budgetary pressures. A secondary conclusion of the debate which had followed the nuclear confrontation of 1992 was that the whole problem might have been avoided if the European allies had adopted a more cooperative attitude and permitted the resupply of Israel to take place. This was held to be only the latest in a long series of grievances against the Europeans and, at this critical juncture, it proved decisive in swinging the balance of political power in favor of those American leaders who had long favored a U.S. withdrawal from Europe.

The political mood in Europe, meanwhile, was such as to ensure that the American pull-out would not be resisted. Indeed, public and official reaction to the events of 1992 in Europe tended to put equal blame on the two great powers, and demanded that Europe somehow distance itself from both as the only means of ensuring that it would not someday become a theater of nuclear confrontation between them. At the same time, a number of European military leaders and conservative politicians found that long-held doubts concerning the reliability of the American nuclear guarantee seemed justified by the recent crisis. While it was possible that the U.S. would react differently in the case of a nuclear threat to Europe than it had in the recent Israeli crisis, the precedent was nonetheless alarming.

In this context, the removal of U.S. forces from Europe would at least have the virtue of clarifying the situation. Europe would be at once responsible for its own defense and free of U.S. domination. In the present circumstances, this seemed to many European leaders to be an acceptable trade-off. There was no question but that it was enormously popular at the public level.

#### **THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM, 1992-2002**

In the decade that followed, the new directions chosen by the various international actors became more clearly defined, leading to far-reaching changes in the pattern of international relations.

In the United States, the commitment to strategic defense made in 1992 was followed up by an intensive technological and industrial effort. By 1996, it became apparent that the president's challenge of developing a functioning system by the year 2002 would be met, although considerable controversy persisted over the eventual effectiveness of the system once in place. The short timetable imposed on the project by political considerations precluded the development of some of the more exotic technologies which had been under development in the late 1980s. Instead, the three-tiered system relied on space-based, kinetic-energy weapons for boost-phase and on two layers of ground-launched missiles for terminal defense.

Despite these self-imposed technological limitations, the cost of the project was great. The administration, meanwhile, was required by a 1990 constitutional amendment to maintain a balanced federal budget and dared not risk its political viability by forcing excessive increases in defense spending at the expense of other government programs. As



a result, most required budgetary trade-offs were made within the defense budget. The impact of building strategic defenses on the U.S. structure of forces was major.

The brunt of these costs were borne by the conventional forces of the Army and Navy. The divisions withdrawn from Europe (the pull-out was completed in 1995) were disbanded rather than re-based in the continental U.S. as had originally been envisioned. American troops also left the Far East at this time, withdrawing completely from Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. As in Europe, this was done in part at the request of local governments. After the elections of 1996, at which time the incumbent president was reelected, cuts were also made in U.S.-based forces. The Navy, for its part, saw the number of aircraft carriers reduced from a high of 15 to 11 over the course of the 1990s. The Air Force was spared significant financial cuts, but faced a severe adjustment of its missions, as it was redeployed to concentrate on continental air and missile defense.

On the diplomatic scene, this was a time of eclipse for the United States, in large part due to the isolationist--or at best unilateralist--sentiment dominant in Washington. This posture was reinforced by a symmetric development in Soviet policy. For the reasons detailed above, the U.S.S.R. sought to avoid new foreign commitments in the early and mid-1990s. The tendency of the Soviet Union to concentrate on domestic matters was reinforced by the perceived necessity to match U.S. advances in strategic offensive and defensive systems. Although few details were known in the west, it was believed that the U.S.S.R. was deploying a new generation of mobile ICBMs and working to match U.S. cruise missile improvements. In addition, tests of Soviet ground based strategic defenses, including new kinds of anti-satellite systems employing ground-based lasers, had been monitored.

It does not follow, however, that the Soviet Union was entirely absent from the international scene. In the first place, tight control over the Soviets' zones of influence in Eastern Europe, Cuba, Afghanistan, North Korea, and Southeast Asia was maintained. In addition, the U.S.S.R. maintained close ties with various self-proclaimed Marxist regimes in Africa, of which Ethiopia and Angola were the most important. The chief change in Soviet policy towards the third world was that it no longer sought out new initiatives, or offered open-ended financial commitments to its remaining allies and clients.

The most important Soviet foreign policy initiative of this period was achieved on the diplomatic and political, rather than the military level. A sustained and largely successful attempt was made to improve relations with Western Europe. The withdrawal

of U.S. forces was not followed, as some had feared, by an immediate assertion of Soviet military or even political hegemony over Europe. Instead, the U.S. pull-out, which the Soviets had long sought, allowed the U.S.S.R. to reduce its own military presence in Eastern Europe somewhat with the twin economic benefits of reducing the Soviet defense burden and gaining the even more willing economic cooperation of the West European nations.

Although the left-leaning governments of the early 1990s were for the most part, replaced by more centrist forces over the course of the decade, the governments of Western Europe remained generally responsive to Soviet overtures. Both sides realized that in the right circumstances a good deal of complementarity could exist between the economies of Eastern and Western Europe. By the mid-1990s, the Soviet Union was providing Europe with the bulk of its mineral and energy resources. In return, the U.S.S.R. and, to a lesser degree, the East European nations provided a ready market for most European agricultural and industrial products at a time when these faced ever-increasing competition from East Asia and the U.S. elsewhere in the world.

Ironically, the long-term results of this opening between the eastern and western halves of Europe bore out many of the predictions which had been made a decade earlier. On the one hand, the growing economic ties, which provided substantial benefits to both sides, were instrumental in allowing the U.S.S.R. to maintain the pace of its strategic arms race with the United States. This was due both to the new Soviet access to specific technological products and processes and to the general improvement of the Soviet economy. (The general Soviet economic situation remained far from sanguine, however.) On the other hand, the increased trade did indeed contribute to stability in Europe by convincing both sides that neither had anything to gain by challenging the other.

In addition, the new climate in Europe did a great deal to decrease tensions in the countries of the Warsaw Pact. In large part, this was due to the general improvement in economic conditions which took place throughout Europe in the mid-1990s. Further, the general lessening of East-West tensions made it possible for the Soviet Union to tolerate a small, but nonetheless significant, degree of social and political liberalization in Eastern Europe.

U.S. political opinion of the time held that the West European countries had been "Finlandized" and were in fact functioning as economic allies of the Soviet Union. Such sentiments did nothing to reverse the continued trend towards chilly U.S.-European

relations, which eventually led to the official dissolution of NATO in 1997. By this date, the alliance had existed only in name for several years. Its place in Western European security planning had been taken by the resurrected West European Union, based primarily on increasingly close cooperation among the U.K., France, and West Germany. The official policy of the W.E.U. was to maintain minimal conventional forces, backed by modernized French and British nuclear forces which, while small in relation to those of the great powers, were by no means insignificant. Primarily, however, the European alliance depended chiefly on its considerable diplomatic and economic leverage to deter any Soviet aggression. In certain other areas, however, the influence of Western Europe was once again on the rise. This was particularly true in the Mediterranean - Middle East region and in certain parts of South America. In these areas, the relative eclipse of the great powers after 1992 created opportunities for Europe to reassert a degree of influence which once seemed to have been lost for good.

Important exceptions to this pattern remained, however. Violence was still the rule in Central America as both great powers continued to back allies and surrogates in the seemingly endless round of dictatorships and insurgencies which gripped that unhappy region. Southern Africa was also highly unstable as the isolated, but still powerful, white elite of the Republic of South Africa fought for survival against radical elements of the black population, backed primarily by the surrounding black states. South Africa, in turn, encouraged and supported armed opposition in these states, keeping the entire region in a state of turmoil.

After 1998, an important change took place in the situation in southern Africa, brought about by renewed Soviet interest in the region. The Soviet Union's withdrawal from foreign commitments had never been as pronounced as that of the United States. The Marxist countries of Southern Africa had never ceased receiving diplomatic support and some measure of military aid from the U.S.S.R. In the latter part of the 1990s, however, the Soviet commitment was once again increased. The Soviet leadership had calculated that the South African regime would soon reach the end of its ability to resist its internal and external enemies, creating a critical power vacuum which the U.S.S.R., with only a minimum of risk, could position itself to fill. The initial result of this increased Soviet involvement was to give Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe the means to end once and for all the endemic insurgencies which had existed on their territories for decades.

The course of events in the Far East was in some ways similar to that in Europe, but it took place in a much more confrontational environment. The chief nations of East

Asia, while continuing to distance themselves from the United States, were unwilling to accept even the appearance of a "Pax Sovietica," such as reigned over Europe. Instead, the growing cooperation between Japan and China was driven primarily by the perceived need to resist Soviet influence in Asia. With the key exceptions of Vietnam (and its Kampuchean and Laotian puppets) and North Korea, the other states of East and Southeast Asia gradually fell in behind these two leaders.

In 1995 these states formed the East Asian Economic and Security Community (EAESC), a rather loosely defined organization which served primarily as a framework for the growing cooperation between China and Japan. As the influence of the United States waned, South Korea fell increasingly into the Japanese sphere of influence while Taiwan was forced to reach an accommodation with Beijing. The gradual reassociation of Taiwan with the mainland, which was modeled after the successful transfer of Hong Kong, was largely complete by the year 2000; the island was allowed to preserve much of its uniquely productive economic system. Beyond the countries already mentioned, the EAESC consisted of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, and the Philippines. The nations of the EAESC held not only a significant proportion of the world's population, but the most dynamic economies of the time. East Asia shared with Western Europe, however, the characteristic that its military potential lagged considerably behind its economic achievements.

The Chinese armed forces, although numerically formidable, were being modernized and re-equipped only relatively slowly. While there was hope that eventually Chinese manpower and Japanese technology could bring China's conventional forces to the point where they might reasonably hope to repulse a Soviet attack, this point would not be reached soon. The gradual improvement in China's military capabilities was significant, however, in that, by the late 1990s, it was considered likely that China had become more than a match for Vietnam. This shift had serious implications for the long-term evolution of Southeast Asia.

China also continued to upgrade its nuclear forces, receiving considerable technological assistance from Japan in doing so. Despite this, there was clearly no hope that the combined efforts of the two nations would match the tremendous effort devoted to the strategic arms build-up by the United States and the Soviet Union. China and Japan also lagged behind the great powers in the area of strategic defenses. While terminals defense systems were under development in Japan and were slated for deployment in the

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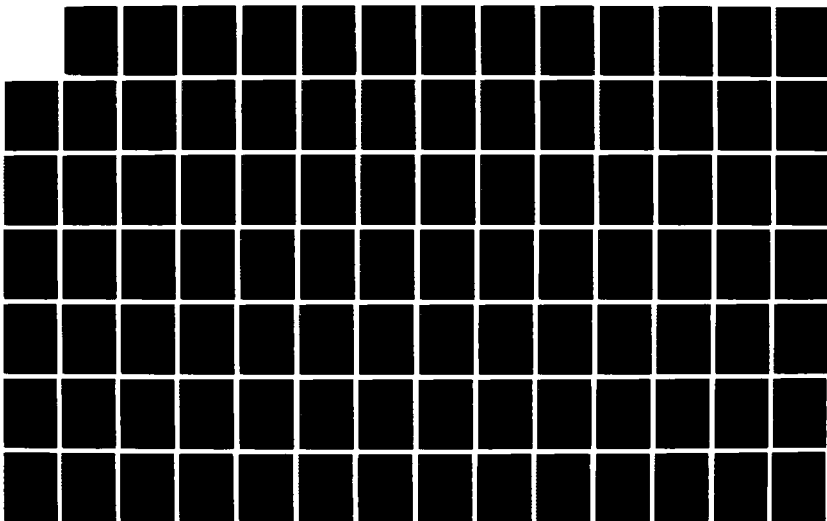
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Chinese missile sites beginning in 2005, the Asian countries did not attempt to match the U.S. effort to build a comprehensive space-based system.

Japan, which had the the EASEC's most advanced technological and industrial base, expanded its production of military equipment considerably, making particular progress in the aerospace and defense electronics fields. The Japanese navy, and in particular its submarine force, was also expanded substantially. Nevertheless, Japan was reluctant to devote an excessive proportion of its resources to creating an armaments industry; the scale which would have been needed to supply the needs of all of its partners was considered excessive by Japanese leaders and public opinion.

As a result, the military potential of the smaller EAESC countries depended in large part on the state of their local armaments industries. Only in South Korea and Taiwan were the sectors highly developed, having been stimulated for many years by the drive for military self-sufficiency in the face of constant threats from North Korea and China, respectively. In the less wealthy EAESC countries, economic development needs tended to take precedence over military investment. As a result, such countries as Thailand and the Philippines remained militarily weak, depending for the most part on aging U.S. equipment.

## **THE RESURGENCE OF THE UNITED STATES, AND GREAT POWER CONFLICT**

The presidential elections in the year 2000 marked an important turning point in the evolution of U.S. policy. Although pledging to continue deployment of the long-sought space-based strategic defense system begun by his predecessor (which was due to achieve its full operational capability in 2002), the new president called for a renewed emphasis on outward looking policies. While the challenge of strategic defense was on its way to being met, he pointed out, the United States was in danger of falling behind in other critical areas if it did not move to end its period of self-imposed isolation. In order to combat this trend, the new administration set to work dismantling some of the more extreme economic barriers set up by its predecessors and repairing political relations with key nations.

The president's advances met with little success in Europe. Anti-American feelings had not been forgotten on the old continent and, more importantly, European leaders believed that the new-found prosperity, stability, and international influence which Europe enjoyed was founded in large part on the perception that it was independent of both great

powers. Renewed ties with the United States would endanger this, and were thus unacceptable.

### **The Beginnings of U.S.-Asian Rapprochement**

The U.S. fared better in attempts to improve relations with the nations of the EAESC. This was made possible by two important factors. The first was the eagerness of the Asian nations to regain access to American markets. The second was that the level of military and political tension between the Asian nations and the Soviet Union was once again on the rise.

In the short run, the security problems of the EAESC nations were caused not so much by the U.S.S.R. itself as by Vietnam and North Korea. North Korea, after a period of relative quiescence following the death of President Kim il Sung was once again becoming aggressive as his successors consolidated their power. The new regime was known to be actively engaged in attempts to destabilize the South Korean government by recruiting, training, and arming radical factions. The Vietnamese, for their part, seemed once again to be losing their grip on Kampuchea, as a new generation of nationalist forces rose up both within Kampuchea itself and among exile communities in other Southeast Asian countries. The danger in this development lay in the prospect that Vietnam would either strike at Kampuchean exile populations in Thailand or involve the Soviets in aggressive actions towards China along the lines of those taken in 1991-92. In addition, the late 1990s saw the resurgence of Soviet-backed insurgencies in a number of Asian countries, of which the most important was the Philippines. In this context, the prospect of renewed participation by the United States in Pacific security affairs was welcomed.

While the United States took no immediate military actions in conjunction with its diplomatic initiatives, a number of long-term preparations were begun which might make such actions possible. In particular, a renewed effort was made to upgrade the capabilities of the U.S. armed forces to project power abroad. As the annual investment cost of the strategic defense system began to decline, available budgetary resources were channeled into a much delayed program of conventional force modernization. The elimination of U.S. commitments to the defense of Europe permitted the U.S. force structure to be designed primarily with a view to rapid deployment and combat in Asia or the third world. In view of the continuing problems in Central America, emphasis was also placed on the development of anti-insurgency forces.



As it turned out, the newly expanded counterinsurgency forces of the United States were first employed not in Central America, but in another area of traditional American influence, the Philippines. By late 2001, communist-led insurgency in the Philippines had once again reached serious proportions, threatening major cities and endangering communications. This situation was a cause of considerable concern not only to the government of the Philippines, but also to leaders in Beijing and Tokyo. The U.S. administration, meanwhile, realized that the Philippines might be a useful stepping stone in an effort to reassert American influence in the Far East. Accordingly, a suggestion made privately in Manila in July 2001 that the U.S. might regain access to bases in the Philippines in return for assistance in counterinsurgency operations was well received by all sides. U.S. advisors were present in the Philippines beginning in December of that year, marking the first U.S. military presence abroad since the final pull-out of troops from Korea, which had taken place in 1996. U.S. naval ships began calling regularly at Subic Bay early in 2002.

#### **Confrontation in Southern Africa**

While these events were proceeding in the Far East, an alarming increase in Soviet activity in southern Africa led to a second, larger, U.S. initiative. This development was tied directly to the accelerating disintegration of South Africa. By the end of 2001, a number of black insurgent groups exercised effective control over more than half of the Republic of South Africa's territory. In addition, black participation in the "official" South African economy had almost entirely ceased. As a result, the country's white population was increasingly isolated, and concentrated into narrow enclaves entirely surrounded by black-controlled territory.

The largest of these white-controlled areas was centered on the Rand, around Johannesburg and Pretoria. A second, smaller, white enclave was located in the western Cape Province, centered on Cape Town. In the eastern city of Durban, an independent multiracial government, dominated primarily by the Zulu tribe and the local Asian population, had been proclaimed and aspired to control all of the former Natal province. This break-away state was recognized neither by the "official" white-run government in Pretoria, or by the other black opposition groups, but it enjoyed considerable support from its local population. The former South African territory of Namibia was ruled ostensibly by a South African-appointed black government. In fact it was almost entirely controlled

by radical black forces, which employed it as a base for operations inside South Africa itself. Similar fates had befallen the states of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland.

Concluding that it was only a matter of time before the remaining white bastions were overrun, the Soviet Union had been maneuvering since the late 1990s to expand its influence in the region. Moscow's first moves in this direction concentrated on building strong ties to the principal insurgent movements within South Africa. In this, the Soviets were largely successful; by the year 2000 the majority of the independent fighting forces united under the umbrella of the African National Congress, were under the control of strongly pro-Soviet leaders.

This development did not go unnoticed in the United States, but the administration in power from 1992 to 2000, in accordance with its general policy, did not consider U.S. involvement in southern Africa to be a viable option. Only after the election of 2000 did the question receive serious consideration and even then, the options available to the U.S. government were limited. Although public interest in the question of South Africa had declined considerably from the high point of the late 1980s, the question remained explosive politically; direct involvement with either the white South Africans or the ANC seemed at best problematic.

The factor which finally led to a U.S. response was the mounting evidence in 2001 and 2002, of a dramatic increase in Soviet activity in southern Africa. Prior Soviet involvement had been limited to financial and material support for South African rebel forces, as well as military and financial assistance to Soviet regional allies. In 2001, for the first time, Soviet personnel in large numbers were observed in Angola and Namibia. More disturbing, satellite photographs showed that a number of air bases in Angola, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique were being upgraded so as to be capable of handling the most modern Soviet long-range and tactical aircraft.

The conclusion reached by the U.S. Government was that if the fighting in South Africa were allowed to continue, the time was not far distant when the weight of the Soviet military presence would translate into permanent political domination. At the same time the strategic importance of southern Africa, in the view of U.S. military leaders, was overwhelming. Given the global strategic environment, the hoped-for U.S. international resurgence would of necessity be based primarily on a maritime strategy. Soviet domination of all of southern Africa would lead inevitably to the establishment of major Soviet naval facilities in the region. These, in turn, would allow the U.S.S.R. to

circumvent the strategic limitations enforced by geography by allowing Soviet submarines free access to the Atlantic and Indian Oceans without first passing through the choke points guarded by the U.S. in the North Atlantic and by the Asian powers in the Far East. Only by finding a means to stop the fighting in South Africa, the American administration concluded, could time be won in which to undertake diplomatic initiatives aimed at countering Soviet influence in the "Front Line" states of southern Africa, and thus to avoid these potential strategic problems.

As it turned out, U.S. policy received an unexpected--and unsought--boost from the actions of the radical white-supremacist regime which controlled the Afrikaner enclave on the Rand. On February 1, 2003, the Pretoria regime announced that it was in possession of a "sizable stockpile" of nuclear weapons, and that it would begin employing them against its enemies if hostilities did not cease within South Africa. To demonstrate the truth of its claim, the Afrikaners stated further that a nuclear device would be detonated in an uninhabited area on the border with Botswana; the explosion of a device with a yield estimated at about 10 kilotons duly took place the next day. No specific deadline was mentioned in the Afrikaner statement; nor was it specified whether the statement was intended to cover hostilities in all of the territory formerly controlled by the Republic of South Africa or merely those currently directed against the Rand enclave. Still, it was clear to all parties that the tactical situation in Southern Africa had been altered radically.

At this point, the U.S. saw an opportunity to launch its diplomatic initiative. The president proposed that an immediate cease-fire be imposed on the basis of current military positions. This accomplished, the three main white or multiracial enclaves would negotiate separately with black nationalist forces. The U.S. further offered to guarantee the integrity of the Cape, Natal, and Rand enclaves while negotiations were underway, and invited the Soviets to do the same for the areas controlled by the black nationalists.

This proposal was immediately accepted by the beleaguered provisional government of the Eastern Cape--into whose area of control was concentrated most of South Africa's remaining English-speaking population, and by the reigning Chief of the Zulu tribe, speaking for the self-styled Free State of Natal. It was ignored totally by the Pretoria regime, which presumably preferred to depend on the threat, so far not acted upon, of nuclear retaliation for its security. Most important of all, and against most expectations, the U.S.S.R. reacted favorably to the proposal. As a result, the ANC leadership announced that it would accept the cease-fire so long as its enemies did the same.

In taking this initiative, the U.S. hoped to bring about a settlement by which the three enclaves would be recognized as separate independent states, while a stable black regime was established in the remainder of the country. Soviet motives, not surprisingly, were quite different. By accepting a temporary truce, the Soviets and their African allies hoped to create a situation in which they could attack their remaining enemies separately. In particular, they wished to dispose of the relatively weaker enclaves of Natal and the Cape before dealing with the dangerous, and presumably nuclear-armed, regime on the Rand.

Accordingly, a cease-fire was proclaimed for all of South Africa on February 10, and was observed initially by all parties, even the Afrikaners, who still refused to acknowledge it officially. At this time, the United States reiterated its pledge to guarantee the integrity of those among the non-ANC forces which chose to participate in peace talks. As a sign of the U.S. commitment, two American aircraft carriers were deployed off the coast of South Africa over the following week. On February 20th, negotiations were convened in Lesotho which were attended by representatives of the United States, the Soviet Union, and all of the local antagonists with the exception of the Afrikaners. It soon became apparent, however, that the black nationalist forces and their Soviet allies had no intention of negotiating for a serious solution to the civil war, but were interested only in gaining time to reinforce and reorganize their forces for a final assault on Natal and the Cape. U.S. and local intelligence sources agreed that substantial numbers of ANC fighters were being transferred from the north to positions in the rebel-controlled mountains east of Cape Town, as well as the areas west of Durban.

By early March, isolated guerrilla-style attacks had resumed in both areas, contrasting sharply with the near-total peace in the north. On March 23rd, the representative of the provisional government of the Cape to the talks in Lesotho, pointing to these signs of impending attack, requested that the U.S. make good on its pledge of support. As if this were a sign for which they were waiting, the ANC forces which had been gathering for the past weeks launched a series of attacks both on the Cape and on Natal within hours of the request for U.S. aid. These attacks were distinguished not only by their timing, but by the fact that they employed a much greater quantity of Soviet-supplied heavy weaponry than the ANC had ever deployed previously. U.S. analysts quickly realized that, if successful, the attacks would almost certainly spell the end of the Cape and Natal governments, leaving the Soviet-backed forces in complete control of South Africa's coastline.

The president and his advisors concluded that such a development was unacceptable, and that only the United States could act to prevent it. Accordingly, U.S. armed forces were ordered into combat for the first time in over a decade. Aircraft from U.S. carriers went into action within two days of the resumption of heavy ANC attacks. Additional tactical air units were ferried to Cape Town over the course of the next week so that by April 1st, two full tactical wings were on the ground. At the same time, large quantities of heavy military equipment were airlifted both to the Cape and to Natal, for use by local forces.

This prompt and decisive U.S. action clearly took the Soviet Union and its allies by surprise. By the second week of April, the attacking ANC forces had withdrawn from all of the advanced positions captured in the first days of the offensive, and were reported to have suffered extremely heavy casualties. Over the course of the following weeks, the black nationalist forces withdrew into territory which they had long controlled to regroup and rearm. In one sense, the balance of power in South Africa had been restored to what it had been before the start of the U.S. initiative. The fact that the U.S. had intervened, however, and even more importantly that U.S. forces remained on the ground in South Africa, marked a clear turning point in the evolution of the South African civil war.

As a result of these events, the two coastal enclaves had fallen under the de facto protection of the United States. The Lesotho talks, which had been suspended at the start of the renewed hostilities were not resumed, as neither the Soviets nor the ANC proved willing to attend. Instead, the United States recognized the provisional governments of the Cape Republic and the Natal Free State and proceeded to enter into long-term security relationships with them. In return for access to naval and air bases at Simonstown and Durban, the U.S. agreed to employ U.S. aircraft and special forces units to help ensure the defense of the Cape and Natal until such time as a long-term solution to the greater regional conflict could be found.

Meanwhile, the issue which had precipitated the whole affair, the nuclear threat made by the Pretoria regime, had fallen into the background. Although not directly involved in the fighting of March and April, Pretoria found its position substantially improved by the sharp defeat suffered by the black nationalists. There is also little doubt that Pretoria's nuclear demonstration shot had a decided impact on the enthusiasm of the ANC forces arrayed against it. Attacks on the Rand decreased sharply following the demonstration.

The situation as it existed by the summer of 2003, thus, resembled only vaguely that which U.S. leaders had hoped for when they undertook their February peace initiative. Instead of a cease-fire paving the way for a more lasting settlement, a sharp confrontation had given way to ongoing low-level conflict in which U.S. forces were directly involved. Instead of putting itself in a position to launch diplomatic efforts aimed at preventing the Soviet militarization of southern Africa, the U.S. now found itself setting up a rival military presence in the region. Nevertheless, a measure of stability had been imposed on southern Africa.

The true strategic significance of the South African confrontation went far beyond the military incidents and build-ups which it occasioned, or the relative local stabilization which it encouraged. After more than a decade of self-imposed isolation, it marked the return of the United States as an activist power, willing to make use of its military capacity to influence events elsewhere in the world. In the interim, the United States had invested a substantial proportion of its resources in the development and deployment of a comprehensive strategic defense system. This combination was the source of considerable alarm for Soviet leaders, who feared that, regardless of the actual capacities of the American strategic defense system, its existence would encourage American leaders, believing themselves secure from nuclear threats, to pursue increasingly bold foreign policy initiatives. U.S. behavior in South Africa, and the coincidence of this move with the operational capability of the strategic defense system, seemed to confirm Moscow's fears.

In fact, the change in U.S. policy had far more to do with a cyclical shift in U.S. public and political opinion as it did with the political impact of strategic defense. Broad public support for involvement in South Africa and the Philippines reflected a renewed desire to play a more active role in the world, and in particular to take visible steps against what seemed to be a new tide of Soviet aggressive expansion. The error in Soviet perceptions did little to mitigate their reaction, however.

#### **Far Eastern Conflicts Lead to U.S.-Soviet War**

While the U.S. and the Soviet Union were skirmishing in southern Africa, the EAESC nations were growing progressively more concerned about the actions of Vietnam and North Korea. The Vietnamese, in particular, were becoming increasingly aggressive in their campaign to crush the new Kampuchean resistance. By 2003, Vietnamese raids into Thailand in pursuit of Kampuchean insurgents had become a common occurrence.

Numerous Thai and other diplomatic protests to Moscow and Hanoi fell on seemingly deaf ears.

In November 2003, the defense ministers of the EAESC nation and the U.S. Secretary of Defense met secretly in Tokyo. At this gathering, the participants agreed that if an effective response were not made to Vietnamese aggression, the security of Thailand would be in serious danger. In addition, such inaction would be interpreted by the Soviet Union and its other allies as a sign that the Asian countries lacked the means and the will to defend their interests. In that case, such other potentially vulnerable states as Malaysia and the Philippines would certainly come under redoubled attack. The alternative was to take prompt and firm action against Vietnam. The defense ministers proposed a series of actions which, taken together, amounted to a renewal of military cooperation between the United States and its former Asian allies, to which were added the People's Republic of China. That the United States was willing to consider such a move was an indication of the magnitude of the shift in the direction of U.S. policy since the beginning of the century.

The specific measures agreed to in Tokyo involved two principal goals. The first was to take immediate steps to safeguard the integrity of Thailand, including the deployment of U.S. tactical air units. Initially, this move would be purely symbolic and the units involved would not participate in combat missions. Such actions were not ruled out, however, if Vietnamese attacks persisted. China, for its part, agreed to increase its assistance to insurgent groups inside Kampuchea, as well as to provide military assistance to the Thai army.

The second phase of the initiative involved putting pressure on Vietnam. This was of particular interest to the Chinese, who saw an opportunity to begin a shift in the practical balance of power in Southeast Asia. The other countries of the region also favored this aspect of the proposal. Feeling themselves threatened either by direct Vietnamese aggression or by Soviet-backed subversion and insurgencies, such nations as Malaysia and the Philippines--not to mention Thailand--were anxious to encourage a longer term U.S. interest in regional security, as well as actions to cause Vietnam to devote additional resources to its own defense.

South Korea and Japan, on the other hand, had reservations about the wisdom of mounting even the appearance of a threat to Vietnam. These two countries had their eyes on the delicate security situation on the Korean peninsula, where only a small increase in Soviet involvement could shift the balance of power irrevocably in favor of North Korea.

Setbacks elsewhere in Asia, the Japanese and Koreans feared, would be likely to lead the Soviets to just such a move. Accordingly, the two countries cautioned that any initiatives taken in Southeast Asia should be strictly limited to defensive moves in Thailand.

The attitude of the United States was closer to that of China. From the point of view of the U.S. administration, U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia was considered as nothing more than a part of the revived U.S. policy of resisting Soviet expansionism wherever possible. In this framework, the strict isolation of regional conflicts was less important than the need to ensure that actions taken were effective.

The actions taken by China and the United States followed from this strategic vision, with only minor concessions to the concerns of Japan and South Korea. Three squadrons of U.S. tactical aircraft were deployed to Thailand in December 2003 and January 2004. The missions assigned to these units were limited to those that could be accommodated on defensive patrols within Thai airspace. The tactics of the Vietnamese, however, who made regular use of aerial attacks on Kampuchean positions inside Thailand, ensured that even such restricted activity would lead to combat. A number of clashes followed over the course of February and March 2004 between U.S. and Vietnamese aircraft. U.S. planes also were attacked by surface-to-air missiles launched from inside Kampuchea. The U.S. aircraft also participated in limited ground support roles to back up defensive actions of the Thai Army.

Unlike the case in South Africa, U.S. forces suffered casualties in these operations. They were fairly light, however; only six American fliers were killed. Vietnamese casualties were much higher. By April, the U.S. actions had led to a marked change in Vietnam's tactics. Air raids and large-scale ground incursions into Thailand virtually ceased, and the Vietnamese once more limited their activity to cross-border shelling and occasional small-scale infiltration; actions with which the Thai armed forces were well equipped to deal. The U.S. forces remained in Thailand as a continued sign of U.S. commitment.

In Kampuchea itself, Chinese assistance to anti-Vietnamese rebels allowed a considerable expansion in the scope of their operations. Although Vietnamese domination of urban centers was not threatened in the short-run, the insurgents exacted an increasing toll in men and equipment on the occupying forces and controlled a growing section of rural territory. By shifting the scene of the most intense fighting away from the border and



into the interior of Kampuchea, this improvement in rebel fortunes also contributed to taking the pressure off Thailand.

While these actions were underway in Thailand and Kampuchea, the U.S. and China were also putting into effect the second aspect of their long-term strategy--putting direct pressure on Vietnam. The main burden of this fell upon China, which moved to reinforce its forces on the Vietnamese border. In deference to the concerns of China's Asian allies, however, no overt offensive actions were taken against Vietnam. The U.S., for its part, used this opportunity to resume the permanent basing of air and naval forces in the Philippines. From there, regular patrols were conducted in the international waters of the South China Sea.

The purpose of both actions was to make it clear to Vietnam and to its Soviet sponsors that any move by Vietnam against China or any other country in retaliation for reverses in Kampuchea would be met with strong resistance. Unfortunately, the Soviets and Vietnamese did not react as hoped. Faced with the latest U.S. and Chinese actions, Moscow's conclusion was that unless there was a prompt and effective response, the enemies of the U.S.S.R. would conclude that all Soviet allies throughout the world were vulnerable and would act accordingly. As a result, the Soviets resolved to make a strong stand in Vietnam.

Beginning in March 2004, Soviet arms shipments to Vietnam were stepped up substantially. More importantly, the number and visibility of Soviet personnel within the country were increased to unprecedented levels. For the first time, Soviet air units began flying patrols over Kampuchea, near the Chinese border, and over the South China Sea. This last mission led to the first direct clashes between U.S. and Soviet forces.

American aircraft and naval ships operating in the South China Sea had received orders to shadow Soviet ships bound for Vietnam closely, but not to attack. Soviet aircraft based in Vietnam, which flew escort missions for certain ships, clearly had been given far less restrictive rules of engagement. On May 15, 2004, Hanoi declared an exclusionary zone two hundred miles out from Vietnam's coast. When U.S. aircraft ignored the zone, they were attacked by Soviet forces. A series of clashes followed on a larger scale than any thus far experienced in Thailand. All parties involved suffered casualties; while U.S. aircraft continued to demonstrate their superiority over the Vietnamese, encounters with Soviet forces were more even.

At the same time, Vietnam resumed its time-honored tactic of provoking incidents on the Chinese border. Although the Vietnamese were receiving ever-increasing quantities of advanced Soviet equipment, Chinese optimism concerning the improvement of its armed forces proved justified: Vietnamese attacks were almost entirely unsuccessful. The chief result of these actions was to increase further the level of great power military involvement in the Far East. In response to the increasing level of aerial conflict in the region, the United States deployed two aircraft carrier battle groups into the South China Sea, although outside Vietnam's unilateral exclusionary zone. Two more carrier battle groups were moved to the the Western Pacific and held in reserve. The Soviets, for their part, increased their military presence in Vietnam further. Soviet air power in Vietnam reached the level of a full air army. More disturbing to U.S military planners were naval intelligence reports indicating the presence of Soviet submarines in the South China Sea.

Despite this build-up, the pace of conflict actually slowed considerably during the summer and fall of 2004. Since U.S. and Chinese forces were still maintaining a strictly defensive posture, this was due chiefly to a decision by the Soviets and Vietnamese to stop provoking incidents. The less than impressive record compiled by their forces to that date no doubt played a role in the decision. In addition, it seems likely that the Soviet Union, aware of Vietnam's isolated position and of the difficulties necessarily involved in supporting large-scale operations there against the combined forces of China and the United States, sought to pursue a more indirect strategy.

Moscow's analysis of the political situation in Asia pointed to China as the key to the situation. U.S. involvement in the area, Soviet analysts concluded, was plausible only in the context of joint Sino-American initiatives, such as had been undertaken in Southeast Asia. If China were to withdraw from these activities, the U.S. was unlikely to act unilaterally, and thus any risk of a direct U.S./Soviet clash might be evaded.

China's chief vulnerability, Soviet planners concluded, was the restraint imposed on it by Japan and South Korea. If pressure were put on these two countries, Soviet reasoning concluded, they would increase their opposition to Chinese initiatives in Southeast Asia and, since China depended ultimately on Japan for financial and technological support, such diplomatic pressures could succeed in modifying China's priorities. In addition, Soviet pressure in Northeast Asia could have a more direct impact on Beijing's strategy by forcing China to devote greater attention and resources to defending the critical areas of Manchuria and northern China.

The U.S.S.R.'s chosen instrument for this new initiative was North Korea. The Soviets were well aware of Japanese and South Korean apprehensions in this direction, and intended to exploit them for its own purposes. In November 2004, U.S. and Japanese intelligence systems detected the steady movement of Soviet air and ground forces into North Korea. These forces, which amounted to perhaps two armored divisions and two tactical air armies, took up positions on North Korea's border with China. At the same time, North Korean troops began to move south to reinforce the already considerable forces on the intra-Korean border.

It soon became apparent that the U.S.S.R. had underestimated Chinese resolve. Beijing, by this time, was committed to a general struggle with the Soviet Union for predominance in the Far East. In order to be successful in this endeavor, China's leaders were keenly aware that they would need the undivided support of all of their Asian allies, as well as the backing of the United States. Maintaining the initiative in the on-going war of nerves with the U.S.S.R. was crucial to this end. While retreat at this time would likely lead to further slippage in Japanese support, as Tokyo sought to preserve stability in northeastern Asia by placating the Soviets, China's leaders were confident that if, Beijing responded with a bold initiative of its own, Japan would follow. In dealing with the United States, it was also important to keep events moving. China was grateful for America's new-found enthusiasm for security cooperation, but was keenly aware that there was no guarantee as to the permanence of this situation.

Rather than retreat from their increasingly successful initiative in Southeast Asia, China's leaders sought a means to neutralize the latest Soviet thrust. To do this, they proposed privately to the United States that the two powers offer to guarantee the security and integrity of South Korea in return for South Korean and Japanese acquiescence to the ongoing Southeast Asian initiative.

The timing of the request was critical, coming immediately after the U.S. presidential election of 2004. The American president, having just been reelected by a wide margin, felt that he had sufficient political maneuvering room at this juncture to take a bold step of this sort. The offer of Sino-American support was made to South Korea on December 1, 2004; the Seoul government accepted at once. The Japanese were somewhat more reticent, questioning privately whether, in light of past experience, the ongoing increase in American influence throughout Asia was truly an unmixed blessing, but Tokyo made no explicit objection. Japan's leaders concluded that with the Soviet deployments into North Korea already underway, a strong response was desirable.

U.S. actions followed the pattern established in Thailand and the Philippines. Tactical air squadrons were deployed to Korea beginning in January 2005, with force levels slated to reach a full wing by the end of February. At the same time, the two carriers which had been moved to the Western Pacific were shifted to positions in the Sea of Japan, within range of South Korea. One additional carrier group was moved from the Atlantic into the Eastern Pacific. Chinese deployments were of a much more massive order. Despite the cooling of relations between the two countries, China had never maintained extensive forces on its border with North Korea, believing, reasonably enough, that the North Koreans were unlikely to provoke hostilities with China while facing a perpetual threat from the South. The arrival of Soviet troops, however, changed this calculation. Over the course of January and February 2005, large numbers of Chinese air and ground forces took up positions in southeastern Manchuria, within easy striking distance of the Korean border.

This unanticipated response on the part of the United States and the Asian powers caused considerable alarm in Moscow. The movement of Chinese troops to the Korean border, necessarily weakened China's defensive posture in other key points of its border with the U.S.S.R. This action, the Soviets concluded, would not have taken place unless China had received strong guarantees from the United States of support in case of Soviet attack. Given the structure of U.S. and Chinese forces, such support would almost certainly include the use of central nuclear forces. The potential tactical applications of U.S. strategic defenses once again played a key role in Soviet thinking on this issue. Even if U.S. offensive forces were not employed against the U.S.S.R., they concluded, U.S. space-based defensive systems, together with the limited Chinese defensive capabilities, might be used to ensure the survival of a significant portion of China's stockpile of offensive nuclear weapons in the event of a Soviet attack. The growing Chinese nuclear forces, in turn, could impose huge costs on any Soviet attacking ground forces, not to mention their possible use against urban and industrial targets. Meanwhile, the U.S. would still retain its own offensive nuclear capability.

Meanwhile, the U.S.S.R.'s tactical situation in both Korea and Southeast Asia was deteriorating. Following the Soviet move into Korea, and the response by the U.S. and the EASEC powers, China concluded that the need for discretion in its dealings with Vietnam was ended. Accordingly, Chinese forces went on the offensive, capturing the key border town of Lang Son in March 2005. At the same time, Vietnamese positions in Kampuchea were in a state of near collapse as Vietnamese troops were withdrawn to participate in

operations against China. The U.S., for its part, continued to avoid initiating incidents in and over the South China Sea. The American air and naval presence in the Philippines was increased, however, in a clear sign that the U.S. was capable of interdicting seaborne supplies to Vietnam if it chose to do so.

In Korea, the chief cause of instability was the policy followed by the South Korean government. The guarantees obtained from China and the United States were considered in Seoul as an event of remarkable good fortune, whose duration was likely to be limited. The nationalist military regime which still ruled South Korea concluded that it was the time to take all possible actions to destabilize and, if possible, overthrow the Pyongyang regime. South Korea's leaders were well aware that such action might provoke an attack from the north. In the present circumstances, though, this seemed to be an acceptable risk.

Accordingly, covert South Korean forces stepped up their activities in the North beginning in March 1955, carrying out sabotage of military installations and assassination attempts against military and political leaders. Perhaps more importantly, South Korean agents increased the scope and tempo of subversive activities, such as the support of visible opposition to the regime in North Korea. Although the results of these operations were fairly scanty--certainly not on a level with the scope of North Korean efforts in the South over the years--their impact on the sheltered society of North Korea was significant.

Although the Seoul government did not consult with its allies before undertaking these policies it did not encounter serious protest from them once they were under way. Noting this, the leaders of the Soviet Union concluded that their posture in Asia was becoming untenable rapidly. North Korea and Vietnam faced clearly unfavorable tactical situations as a result of the de facto Sino-American alliance. Without extensive Soviet support, it was not likely that either regime would survive. Even with military assistance from Moscow, moreover, both governments were vulnerable to covert operations and insurgent movements.

The key to the Asian balance of power was still China. Without the support of China's extensive military establishment, the remaining Asian nations, even with the support of the United States, would be powerless to threaten Soviet interests. China itself was clearly vulnerable to Soviet attack on the conventional level. Such an attack, or even the threat thereof, seemed to be the only remaining means of salvaging the Soviet Union's interests in Asia. Soviet planners were thus drawn increasingly to escalation.

The problem facing Soviet planners, however, was the question of what would happen at the strategic level in the event of a conventional attack on China. Here, the involvement of the United States could transform a regional conflict into a global nuclear confrontation. In such a confrontation, the United States' untested strategic defense system would provide an uncertain factor of tremendous importance. If the system truly provided the comprehensive coverage which its builders claimed, the Soviet's position could be catastrophic. Even if U.S. strategic defenses were only partially effective, the attrition of Soviet offensive capabilities could be sufficient to tip the scales adversely.

In any case, the immediate problem facing Soviet decision makers was not so much the capabilities of the American system as the perception of U.S. leaders as to those capabilities. If America's confidence in its strategic defenses were sufficient to allow it to contemplate a nuclear first strike against the U.S.S.R. in response to a Soviet attack on China, then the actual capabilities of the U.S. system would be irrelevant. This possibility, Soviet leaders concluded, was a risk that the Soviet Union could not accept. The need to act directly against China, however, was now agreed in Moscow to be pressing.

The conclusion reached in Moscow was that an attack on the space-based components of the American strategic defense system must take place in conjunction with a conventional attack on China. Improvements in Soviet anti-satellite capability since the mid-1980s made such an attack possible. While it was not realistic to believe that the entire U.S. defensive system could be destroyed in such an attack, Soviet planners believed that sufficient damage could be accomplished to it to erode U.S. confidence in its capacity to provide a comprehensive defense. Lacking this confidence, the Soviets believed, no U.S. president would consider launching a strategic strike unless the U.S. were directly threatened. The U.S.S.R. would then have a virtually free hand to carry out military operations against China.

This complex plan accordingly was put into execution. On April 15, 2005, the Soviet government delivered an ultimatum to Beijing, demanding that Chinese forces be pulled back from the Korean and Vietnamese borders within 48 hours. As expected, the warning was ignored. On the 17th, Soviet units stationed in Mongolia and on the Manchurian border, which had long been on a maximum alert level, crossed into China. Coordinated with this action a concentrated attack by both ground and space-based anti-satellite systems was launched against the orbiting portions of the U.S. strategic defense system. The attack was reasonably successful; a significant portions of the U.S. system was destroyed. On the hot line, the Soviet General Secretary warned the American

President not to retaliate for the attack, and by all means not to involve the United States in the Soviet action against China.

### **The Disposition of Forces in April 2005**

Due to the evolution of American policy during the 1990s, a historically low number of U.S. troops were stationed abroad when war broke out in April 2005. All of the deployments, further, were fairly recent. The only U.S. ground forces operating on foreign soil were two battalions of Army Special Forces troops engaged in counter-insurgency operations in South Africa. U.S. advisors were also present in the Philippines.

U.S. tactical air units were deployed in Asia and South Africa. Two wings were now permanently based in the new South African states of Natal and the Cape Republic, one each in Simonstown and Durban. The U.S. presence in Thailand still consisted of two tactical squadrons in 2005, while a full wing was once again based at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines. In the most recent deployment of American forces, a U.S. tactical wing was based in South Korea.

American naval deployments mirrored this pattern of involvement. Two carrier battle groups each were deployed off the shores of South Africa, Vietnam and Korea. Aircraft from the first two were participating in the ongoing activity of other U.S. forces in the region, while the task force in the Sea of Japan provided a potential source of support for American and South Korean forces in case of conflict in Korea. One carrier group in the eastern Pacific and two in the Atlantic completed the U.S. active deployment. The final two of the U.S. Navy's 11 carriers were in U.S. ports, undergoing periodic refitting, and would not be available for some weeks.

The principal deployments of Soviet troops abroad at this time were in Vietnam and North Korea. In the former, a full Soviet tactical air army was carrying out aggressive patrols against both U.S. and Chinese forces. The much larger deployment of Soviet forces in North Korea included two air armies and two armored divisions. The critical component of Soviet military power in this situation, however, was not the U.S.S.R.'s forces abroad, but rather the estimated 20 to 25 fully mobilized divisions in the Soviet Far East which were arrayed against China. It was the strength of these forces, as well as the Soviets' ability to reinforce them at need, which would decide the outcome of the conventional struggle in Asia.

The role played in the Sino-Soviet war which began in April 2005 by U.S. conventional forces would clearly be constrained by the small size of these forces. Accordingly, the principal U.S. options at this time revolved around the role of American nuclear forces, either at the strategic or the tactical level. Given the forces available to the United States in the immediate vicinity of the zone of conflict, it is not clear that the use of tactical nuclear weapons would have a significant effect beyond serving as a final warning to the Soviet Union. Chinese tactical nuclear forces, in any case, would be available to Beijing to meet perceived military necessities at this level. Accordingly, the onus of U.S. participation would fall almost entirely on the country's strategic forces. Whether and how to employ these forces, which had been steadily upgraded and expanded since the late 1980s, was the key decision to be made by U.S. leaders.



## **IX. SCENARIO ZETA: DISINTEGRATION OF THE SOVIET EMPIRE**

This scenario illustrates one possibility for U.S./Soviet conflict that might arise from events featuring the gradual erosion of Soviet control of its East European empire and internal upheavals within the U.S.S.R. The primary dynamic within the scenario results from the intensification and prolonged continuance of two trends evident in the 1980s: i) a gradual decline in Soviet economic performance relative to other industrialized nations and even portions of the third world; and ii) a reassertion of U.S. military prowess and political leadership on a global basis, backed by its advanced technology and great economic leverage.

As these fundamental trends continued from the 1980s into the 1990s, the Soviets slowly lost position and influence in the third world, a process capped by a successful revolution in Cuba which overthrew the communist government there in the late 1990s and terminated any Soviet influence in both the Western Hemisphere and southern Africa. The inability of the U.S.S.R.'s leadership to cope with these events hastened their political demise, inaugurating a period of internal instability at the beginning of the new century. During this period, longstanding problems in Eastern Europe intensified and spread to non-Russian portions of the U.S.S.R. itself. Finally, an open struggle for control of the military apparatus of the Soviet state in 2005, triggered by large-scale revolts in Eastern Europe, provided both opportunity and danger for the West.

The principal events leading up to the confrontation in 2005 are set out in the chronology below.

### **CHRONOLOGY**

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 1987    | FRG election results in new CDU/FDP coalition, but with greatly diminished majority.<br>Both sides exceed SALT limitations on strategic offensive force.                             |
| 1988    | British election results in Labour government, which moves immediately on "denuclearization program."  |
| 1988-89 | Very bad weather hampers Soviet economic recovery.   |
| 1989    | Congressional initiative to remove all U.S. troops from Europe narrowly defeated; renewed efforts seem likely.<br>Provisional "Contra" government established on occupied territory. |

- India uncovers evidence of Pakistani complicity in Sikh terrorism in the Punjab; confrontation results.
- 1990 U.S. agrees to remove cruise missiles from Great Britain by the end of the century.  
Pinochet overthrown in coup with tacit support of U.S.  
Soviets offer to remove all intermediate-range missiles from Europe if other governments follow British lead; proposal results in collapse of CDU/FDP coalition in Bonn.  
New FRG election results in minority SPD government dependent on "Green" support.  
Pakistani nuclear test.
- 1991 FRG /GDR/Czech negotiations result in agreement to create "chemical weapon free zone."  
Left-wing coup in Peru.  
Soviets decide to deploy area BMD system covertly.  
Israeli-Syrian war.
- 1992 U.S. administration announces decision to deploy ground-based ballistic missile defenses around military targets.  
Peruvian government falls in U.S.-backed coup.  
Soviet troops intervene in Poland; fighting continues sporadically for six months.  
Moderate incumbent reelected to U.S. presidency; conservatives make gains in Congress.
- 1993 U.S. decides not to resume bilateral arms control negotiations.  
Elections in the U.K. result in a conservative government.  
Split in the SPD topples the Bonn government.  
New FRG election results in conservative government.  
Security situation in Poland and DDR continues to deteriorate; anti-Soviet terrorist attacks become increasingly common in following years.  
Soviet military build-up in Eastern Europe.
- 1994 Japanese elections; right-wing nationalist party emerges as primary challenger to the ruling LDP.  
U.S. conservatives gain in Congressional elections.
- 1994/95 Conservative governments elected in Belgium, Italy, Netherlands, and Norway.  
NATO reacts to Soviet increases by upgrading its own troops in Europe.  
First signs of opposition within the U.S.S.R.
- 1995 NATO heads-of-state agree on rearmament program including air and missile defenses.  
U.S./Japanese crisis.  
First significant Mujaheddin raid on Soviet military forces in central Asia; raids continue.
- 1996 Soviet ballistic missile defense system operational, includes 5,000 interceptors at both military sites and civilian targets.  
"Hard-right" candidate wins U.S. presidential election.
- 1997 Sandinistas hard pressed by "Contras" request Soviet and additional Cuban assistance; U.S. moves to interdict any Cuban attempt to reinforce Managua; Sandinista regime falls to U.S.-backed "Contras."  
Fidel Castro's leadership increasingly questioned; Castro forced to resign in favor of his brother Raoul.
- 1998 Under pressure from military leaders, Raoul Castro pulls Cuban troops out of Africa.
- 1999- Economic problems and U.S.-backed subversion lead to 2000 opposition in Cuba.
- 2001 Military coup in Havana; Soviet advisors expelled from Cuba.  
Shake-up in Soviet leadership; military and security leaders emerge in control.  
U.S. president reelected, pledges to continue tough foreign policy stand.
- 2002 Harder Soviet line in Eastern Europe; Soviet military and security forces employed routinely to keep order in Poland and DDR.
- 2003-04 Troop transfers to Eastern Europe weaken Soviet forces in Afghanistan; Mujaheddin carry out repeated raids into the U.S.S.R.; increased opposition to Moscow among the Soviet muslim population.

- 2004 Mujaheddin stage large-scale raid into the Soviet Union; Moscow decides to react decisively.  
Soviets provoke Indo-Pakistani war; nuclear weapons used by both sides; Pakistani defeat enables Soviets to isolate Afghan Mujaheddin, contain them militarily.  
Security situation in Eastern Europe worsens; Soviet military rule proclaimed in most affected areas.  
Western attempts to aid refugees lead to border clashes; U.S. forces involved.  
NATO increases force posture in Europe; four additional U.S. divisions prepared for deployment.
- 2005 Further shake-up within Soviet hierarchy; proponents of preemptive strike seize control; Soviet nuclear strike against over 100 military targets in Europe; damage to NATO military potential estimated at over 50 percent.  
NATO responds with nuclear strike by Europe-based forces against military targets in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

## **BACKGROUND TO CONFLICT: GLOBAL TRENDS, 1987-96**

In the ten years from 1987 through 1996, opinion and political trends in the west shifted substantially--first against the United States, largely in reaction to developments earlier in the 1980s, but then restabilizing in support of policies following traditional centrist lines. In the Soviet Union, it was a period of stagnation, failed initiatives, and disappointing leadership. In the third world, it was a time of gradual reconciliation with the West, of recognition in most nations that for the most practical reasons of economic growth--in some cases, even survival--it was necessary to develop and maintain tolerably good relations with the Western industrialized nations.

### **The Evolution of U.S. Foreign Policy**

The United States remained a nation divided, uncertain of its proper role in world affairs, during most of the 1987-96 period, but it emerged at the end with conservative leadership and a tough-minded foreign policy. The basic strengths of the nation's resources and economic system assured continued, if modest, economic growth during the period. Still, the rate of growth disappointed most experts and political leaders, and led to pockets of relative economic deprivation in certain industrial sectors and geographic locations. These modest American economic gains contrasted with more vigorous economies in East Asia, which led to quasi-isolationist sentiments among many Americans and, for a time, influenced U.S. foreign policies.

Relations with the U.S.S.R. remained generally negative throughout this time, and, except for brief periods, the rhetoric of both countries was extremely harsh. Despite this, the minor crises which erupted over the Middle Eastern and Polish situations (see below), did not lead to any serious confrontation. Although some U.S./Soviet discussions on arms

took place in the Geneva-based Committee on Disarmament, the administration that took office in 1993 found it impossible politically to renew meaningful bilateral discussions. Existing restraints on offensive nuclear forces had ceased to be observed as early as 1987; both sides' forces slowly increased and, by 1996, there were roughly 18,000 warheads in each nation's central arsenal with modernization programs continuing at a rapid pace.

Although neither nation ever renounced the 1972 ABM Treaty formally, both sides' pretense of continued observance became less and less credible. By 1996, the Soviet Union had deployed approximately 5,000 new ground-based, interceptor missiles and associated radars which the U.S. was persuaded were intended to defend against ballistic missiles. U.S. intelligence agencies attributed a light area defense capability to these weapons, as well as their obvious mission of defending Soviet ICBMs and key command facilities. Soviet spokesmen claimed that they were only a new type of air defense system. For its part, the United States decided in 1992 to develop and deploy a system incorporating two types of ground-based interceptor missiles for the defense of key strategic facilities, including ICBMs, command facilities, and key air and naval bases. The system was expected to be fully operational by 2003. (Unanticipated engineering problems, however, set the program back several years over the course of the 1990s.) Intensive research also was to continue on more advanced technologies that might be used for space-based components of a defensive system later in the new century.

American policies toward the third world, particularly those incorporating a risk of conflict, remained bitterly divisive. The U.S. continued to support the Mujaheddin insurgents in Afghanistan who, by 1996, controlled large portions of the country, tied down roughly 250,000 Soviet troops within Afghanistan, and even staged sporadic raids into the U.S.S.R. itself. U.S. influence in South Asia was generally very low, however. Relations with Iran were non-existent. Aid to the Mujaheddin was possible only with the sufferance of the Pakistani government, which gained from the exchange both in terms of U.S. military and economic assistance, and also in U.S. forbearance as Pakistan developed nuclear weapon capabilities. By the end of the period, both India and Pakistan had small nuclear arsenals.

At a much lower level, the U.S. also continued to provide support to the "Contras" and other anti-communist forces in Latin America. Constantly the subject of intense debate in the U.S. Congress, and hampered sporadically by various types of restrictions, the "Contra" aid was sufficient to permit insurgents to make slow progress in their efforts to topple the Sandinista regime in Managua.

Although U.S. administrations flirted with the idea in the late 1980s and early 1990s, no effective American support was ever provided to insurgent organizations in southern African countries, such as Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in Angola, due to domestic U.S. politics. Memories of the Vietnam War remained strong enough to prevent any significant aid to anti-communist forces in Cambodia and Laos, as well. Sporadic assistance from South Africa and China, respectively, allowed rebel groups in southern Africa and Southeast Asia to continue their struggle, but not to pose a real threat to the governments involved, which continued to receive strong Soviet backing, through Cuban and Vietnamese surrogates, throughout most of the 1990s.

These policies produced mixed results. The strong stand in Central America was generally successful, and the "Contras" gains (a provisional government was established in occupied territory in 1989) encouraged the persistence of sympathetic regimes in neighboring states. South American governments remained somewhat aloof and privately critical of these efforts, but their need to ensure continued access to export markets in the United States--and to maintain credit lines with private U.S. banks and with international financial institutions dominated by American interests--guaranteed that no serious public criticisms or negative actions were taken. Cuban and Nicaraguan efforts throughout this period to develop an "anti-Contra" coalition and to build a bloc of states willing to repudiate their international financial obligations received virtually no support. Only a short-lived left-wing government in Peru in the early 1990s, toppled within a year by a CIA-backed group, attempted such a radical solution to its economic problems.

The U.S. position in the Middle East was damaged by a brief but bloody Israeli-Syrian War which broke out in 1991 and culminated in a serious defeat for Syria, but this damage was not permanent. Similarly, the U.S. position in Africa was hampered by continued flirtations with insurgent movements believed to be sponsored by the white regime in South Africa. Far more serious, though, were difficulties between the U.S. and its industrial allies in Europe and East Asia. In the latter case, continued tensions resulting from economic issues and American perceptions of an unfair security burden caused severe problems in U.S.-Japanese relations and nearly wrecked the alliance in 1995. These difficulties also complicated efforts to build closer security ties with China.

### **Developments in Western Europe**

U.S. relations with the allies in Western Europe were harmed to some extent by the persistence of economic problems, but more seriously by differences over security policies.

The failure of arms control negotiations contributed measurably to the poor showing of the incumbent conservative government in West Germany's election in February 1987. Although the coalition remained in power, its margin was so narrow as to cripple its ability to govern. The problem was compounded in June 1988 when a Labour government was elected in Great Britain and moved immediately both to cancel British nuclear modernization programs and to negotiate arrangements for U.S. bases in Great Britain that would prohibit the deployment of nuclear weapons except in crises, when agreed by both governments.

The British demands stimulated a huge backlash against NATO in the United States; a Congressional initiative to remove all U.S. troops from Europe was narrowly defeated in 1989. Faced with the possible collapse of the alliance, the British government moved more slowly in the negotiations and narrowed its demands. In 1990, however, it was agreed that U.S. cruise missiles would be removed by the end of the century. This prompted a Soviet offer to dismantle all its intermediate-range missiles in Europe if the other host European governments would make comparable arrangements. Although the Soviet offer included no arrangements to verify its pledge, and included no guarantees that the weapons would not simply be redeployed to Asia, the German foreign minister, a representative of the junior partner in the ruling coalition, the FDP, urged its acceptance. When the CDU prime minister refused, the FDP withdrew from the coalition and the government fell.

The new election in July 1990 resulted in a minority SPD government which retained power only with the tacit support of the radical Green party. The new government moved immediately to negotiate bilateral security agreements with the East German government, including the creation of a "chemical weapon free zone" that would cover both German states and Czechoslovakia. Its consultations with NATO on the question largely took the form of informing its allies of actions already taken. While creating some bitterness in allied capitals, the bilateral negotiations (which covered several other topics as well) did have the benefit from NATO's perspective of creating greater tensions between East Germany and the U.S.S.R.

Working with the British, the new German government also demanded radical changes in NATO doctrines and force postures, demands which resulted in great agitation within the alliance and a spate of internal studies. Privately, U.S. officials began to make plans for major reductions in U.S. forces in Europe. The slide toward disintegration of the alliance was stopped only by the Soviet intervention in Poland early in 1992.

The brutal and prolonged character of the Soviet intervention, combined with the inability (or unwillingness) of Western states to do anything about it, had a profound effect on West European public attitudes. Although the internal policies of the Socialist governments did not change visibly--there were not, for example, increases in defense spending--considerable efforts were made to placate American opinion and to rebuild close ties with the United States. Demands for revisions of basing arrangements and for changes in NATO doctrines were dropped; efforts to build closer bilateral ties with the U.S.S.R. and the states of Eastern Europe were terminated.

These relatively minor policy changes came too late to save the governments in question, however. In London, a new conservative government replaced the Labour regime in 1993. In the same year, an effort within the SPD to revise security policies led to a split in the party and the fall of the government in Bonn. The CDU gained a clear majority in the new election in January 1994. Conservative shifts in governing coalitions followed in Brussels, Oslo, the Hague, and Rome. All told, by 1995, virtually all West European governments were run by conservative coalitions supporting a vigorous rebuilding of NATO's conventional and nuclear capabilities. Prominent among these plans was research to develop effective defenses in Europe against aircraft and shorter-range missiles.

The Polish uprising also influenced American politics in 1992. Conservative candidates made serious runs for the presidential nominations of both major parties. Neither won; apparently though, only because the Polish intervention occurred too late to influence the primaries decisively. The incumbent, a moderate, was reelected, but conservatives made strong inroads in both the House and the Senate. The Republicans regained control of the latter in 1992 and, although the Democrats retained control of the House, defense hard-liners advanced in the ranks of both parties. These gains were repeated in the mid-term election in 1994. In 1996, both parties ran conservatives and the hard-right candidate swept into the White House, carrying control of both the House and Senate with him.

#### **The U.S.S.R. and Its Allies**

Things did not go well for the Soviet Union during this period. Despite his energetic leadership, apparent flexibility in arms negotiations, and favorable public image, Mikhail Gorbachev proved unable in the late 1980s to deal effectively with the U.S.S.R.'s staggering economic problems. Modest reforms and some experimentation with

decentralization and personal incentives were attempted, but these only skirted the systemic problems of the Soviet economy and could not reverse its negative trend. Extremely bad weather in 1988-89 and continuing downward pressures on energy prices hampered efforts at economic recovery in the U.S.S.R., but the real problems were structural. Entrenched elites were unwilling to give up their privileged positions; maintaining totalitarian controls made the introduction of new technologies and the creation of the more open educational and scientific systems necessary to stimulate the advance of domestic technologies impossible; the enormous burden of Soviet military expenditures, combined with the reluctance of Western governments and financiers to invest in the U.S.S.R. deprived the Soviet Union of the capital necessary to rebuild its industrial base.

By the mid-1990s, the Soviet economy was smaller than the economies of Japan, West Germany, and France, as well as the U.S., and the technologies commonly encountered in the Soviet civilian sector were laughable even as compared to those found in the major cities of the third world--to say nothing of North America, Western Europe, and East Asia. Even earlier in the decade, it was clear that the new generation of Soviet leaders had given up on changing the system. They settled down to preserving their international position by maintaining a very high rate of military spending and supporting covert and limited overt operations abroad, and to preserving their privileged positions internally through a tightening of controls on Soviet society.

The brief period of experimentation was not without its consequences, however, primarily in Eastern Europe. Determined to resolve the U.S.S.R.'s economic problems in the early years of his regime, Gorbachev had encouraged a liberalization in dealings with Soviet allies in the Warsaw Pact. A soft line was necessary, he had determined, both to avoid internal problems in those countries due to economic hardships and also to maintain a favorable image of the U.S.S.R. in Western Europe. The latter, he hoped, would result in greater access to Western technologies, goods, and credits, and also help to divide the nations of Western Europe from the United States.

By 1991, taking advantage of greater Soviet tolerance, most of the states of Eastern Europe had greatly expanded economic ties with the West, instituted a degree of decentralization and greater openness to make more rapid economic growth possible, and begun a wide range of political and social exchanges with West European nations which exposed their populations to Western freedom and affluence to a far greater degree. The economic effect in Poland was particularly noteworthy, as an infusion of Western capital and technology--particularly from West Germany--had very clear near-term effects on that



long-suffering nation's economic situation. The political effect was perhaps greatest in East Germany, however, where the leadership acted rapidly to expand ties with the Bonn regime across-the-board, including--once the SPD government came to power--in the security area. Increasingly, the government in Berlin appeared to be willing to act without first consulting Moscow.

Soviet leaders became increasingly restive with this course of events. Although their policies seemed to be having the desired effect of causing problems between the U.S. and its European allies, comparable trends were dividing the nations of Eastern Europe from the U.S.S.R. Soviet officials feared the eventual emergence of a united Europe that would dwarf the U.S.S.R. in economic power, and particularly the closer cooperation between the two Germanies. There were also signs that Soviet citizens were taking note of the greater political freedoms and more rapid economic growth in Eastern Europe, particularly in the traditionally restive non-Russian areas along the Baltic and in the Ukraine. Soviet leaders also were concerned with the failure of their arms control initiatives and the continued U.S. progress in the development of advanced defensive technologies.

Scanning the globe, the U.S.S.R. found little to take solace in. It had been unable to gain control of the insurgency in Afghanistan; its allies in Nicaragua were losing ground; its position in the Middle East remained isolated, with only Syria as a close ally; neither the insurgents within South Africa nor left-leaning nearby governments were doing particularly well. The U.S.S.R. had been unable to improve relations with China significantly and, although the latter's security relationship with the United States had not deepened as had once been feared, China did look increasingly to Japan and other democratic nations in East Asia for both economic ties and technological assistance.

Increasingly, such pessimistic assessments came to dominate internal debates within the highest party circles. Finally, in July 1991, a coalition of forces including the military, heads of the security organizations, and those responsible for dealings with foreign communist parties were able to force Gorbachev to accept a change of direction. The new Five Year Plan was revised to accommodate a sharp increase in military spending; in particular, a decision was made to deploy a nationwide system of ballistic missile defenses. Moreover, guidelines were issued to ensure more orthodox views on appropriate political and social behavior. Specifically, communist governments in Eastern Europe were directed to clamp down on the increasingly open ties between their citizens and the west.

Mindful of the experience in 1981/82, the Polish government moved energetically, and perhaps with too heavy a hand, to implement Moscow's directives. The result was a new wave of popular protests and civil disobedience. A series of unfortunate incidents involving the deaths of protestors at the hands of the police caused the situation to escalate, and brought church leaders more directly into the conflict in support of the people. Determined to use the situation to bolster his threatened leadership, Gorbachev resolved to act decisively. In March, when Polish security forces proved unwilling to apply sufficient force to control crowds led by priests carrying religious symbols, he directed Soviet special forces and the two Soviet divisions already in Poland to take control of key military and governmental facilities, and mobilized additional divisions on Poland's eastern border. Soviet forces in East Germany also were placed on alert, but were not used in Poland for fear that they might be required in the GDR.

Gorbachev made the mistake, though, of not applying sufficient force at the very outset of the crisis. The intervention added long dormant resentments of suppressed Polish nationalism to the existing demands for political and economic freedoms. Individual soldiers, even whole units, deserted the Polish forces with their weapons and sided with the people. There was wholesale violence and bloodshed, and far more Soviet forces were required eventually to contain the situation. All told, intense fighting lasted for a month, and sporadic incidents took place into the summer, requiring an additional twelve Soviet divisions and special forces to gain control.

Western nations protested but, other than aiding refugees, chose not to act; NATO decided not even to place its forces on alert, for fear of provoking additional Soviet actions. The political consequences in the West were severe, as have been described. They were no less severe in the U.S.S.R. Gorbachev was replaced before the year was out; his more flexible philosophy discredited permanently in the eyes of the Soviet elite. Although a single individual was named General-Secretary, power within the Politbureau was wielded by a troika representing the armed forces, the security organs, and the now dominant orthodox ideologues of the party apparatus. Totally discredited were those elements which had gained prominence in the early years of Gorbachev's rule, particularly the so-called "Americanists" of the Foreign Ministry, modernists within the party secretariat, and the technocrats of government ministries and the scientific establishment.

## Developments in Other Regions

Relevant events in other regions have been mentioned already in the context of developments within the major blocs. They are summarized below:

- 1) *East Asia:* The democratic nations of this region remained relatively prosperous during the 1987-96 period. Japan continued to follow the strong anti-Soviet line initiated by Prime Minister Nakasone in the mid-1980s and to build up its armed forces, although within modest bounds. Over time, the Japanese increasingly lost the inhibitions of the post-war years and became more assertive, both as individuals and as a nation. They acted increasingly as the de facto leader of the ASEAN nations, and played a stronger role in Korea. They also supplanted the United States, to a degree, as the focus of Chinese efforts to modernize its society and economy. Importantly, the Japanese became increasingly resentful of constant criticism from the United States about both economic and security issues.

The problem became worse after the 1992 Polish crisis, which the Japanese interpreted as indicating that the United States' security policies were no more successful than its economic policies had been; a perception of superiority became more and more evident in Japanese attitudes. In the 1994 election, a right-wing party espousing termination of the security alliance with the United States and the expansion of Japan's own armed forces, including the development of nuclear weapons, fared surprisingly well--replacing the Socialists as the main opposition party. This caused the ruling LDP government to reevaluate its policies and to conclude that it was time to assert Japanese interests more strongly in relations with the United States, or at least to be seen by the Japanese public to be taking such positions.

The actual crisis in U.S.-Japanese relations occurred one year later--the result of years of accumulated resentments on both sides. The conservative Congress elected in 1994, acting to prevent the U.S. electronics and other high technology industries from following the U.S. automobile industry into oblivion, moved early in its first session to enact wide-ranging protectionist legislation affecting primarily imports of Japanese and other Asian goods. Japanese leaders reacted with uncharacteristic public denunciations and suggested that the implementation of such trade restrictions would trigger a far-ranging review of U.S.-Japanese ties, including the security relationship and the status of U.S. bases in Japan.

The dispute, which dominated the news for some months, raised popular passions in both countries. Although resolved eventually through a series of gestures on the part of both governments--and as a result of the gutting of the trade legislation which eventually was passed by the Congress, the crisis left

scars in both nations. Moreover, its willingness to stand up to the United States had the extended effect of strengthening Japan's leadership role in Asia, including its ability to guide the policies of China. Much of this had to do with the perception of Asian leaders that by singling out Asian nations for restrictive trade actions, the United States had demonstrated the persistence of its racial biases.

- 2) *South Asia:* In addition to the persistence of the Afghan insurgency, the key development in South Asia was the deterioration of Indo-Pakistani relations and the acquisition by both countries of nuclear weapons. Tensions between the two countries had increased sharply in 1989 when India uncovered evidence of Pakistani complicity in Sikh terrorism in the Punjab, mobilized its troops on the border, and threatened punitive actions. Although an actual war was avoided at the time, tensions remained high. They were not helped when Pakistan chose in September 1990 to detonate a nuclear device underground. Claiming that the device was intended solely for peaceful purposes, the Pakistanis thus put themselves in the same position which India had achieved in 1974. Both nations thereafter pursued the acquisition of small nuclear arsenals and appropriate means of delivery; each state detonated two more devices by the end of 1996.

Although its nuclear test probably had negative consequences with regard to Pakistan's relations with India, by stimulating the Indian nuclear program and ruling out the possibility of a reconciliation between the two states, it did have one positive effect, causing the Soviet Union and its Afghan allies to become somewhat less willing to carry out punitive strikes on Pakistani territory as part of their efforts to control the Afghan insurgents. This became increasingly important as the more aggressive U.S. administration after 1992 pressured Pakistan to permit larger and qualitatively improved quantities of arms to reach the insurgents. This situation led to impressive Mujaheddin advances which regained control of the rural areas that had been lost to Soviet offensives in the late 1980s and once again isolated Soviet and regular Afghan forces in cities and military bases, and in the key lines of communications between Kabul and the Soviet Union. Indeed, toward the middle of the decade, even these strongholds began to come under attack and, in July 1995, the Mujaheddin staged their first serious raid into the U.S.S.R. itself.

- 3) *The Middle East:* Conflicts in the Middle East also continued unresolved. The Iran/Iraq War had largely come to an end by the beginning of the 1990s, but was never terminated formally. Both sides retained the positions which they had occupied, corresponding roughly to the pre-war boundary, and garrisoned them intensely. Oil production and shipments were resumed eventually, a factor which contributed to the continued depression in the energy industry well into the 1990s.

Little progress was made toward settling the Arab-Israeli conflict. In October 1991, having succeeded in stabilizing the situation in Lebanon, but otherwise isolated in an increasingly Western-oriented Middle East, and with new confidence in armed forces which had been re-equipped with the latest Soviet weapons, Syrian president Assad decided to gamble. Concluding that a success could not only reverse the humiliating defeats suffered in 1973 and 1982, but also give him renewed status and a leadership role in the Arab world, Assad initiated a surprise attack across the Golan Heights and through southern Lebanon into Israel itself.

Caught off guard, the Israeli Air Force suffered considerable losses on the ground, but not so many as to prevent it from regaining control of the air over the region within 24 hours. Under its umbrella, Israeli ground forces were able to push back the Syrian incursion and begin to advance toward Damascus and Beirut. Moreover, faced with this disastrous situation, elements of the Syrian armed forces representing the non-Alawite majority overthrew Assad and sued for peace. Their revolution was made possible by the huge casualties inflicted by Israel on the special security forces that had protected the ruling factions. Syria's new leaders agreed to withdraw all forces from Lebanon and to cede the Golan to permanent Israeli sovereignty.

It all happened so fast that other Arab states did not have to face seriously the difficult decision of whether or not to aid Syria. Nor did the Soviet Union have to confront the predicament of how to rescue its ally from the disastrous situation. Assad's defeat, however, did lead over the course of the year to a major reduction in the number of Soviet advisors in Syria and to restrictions on Soviet naval basing rights in the country. It also reaffirmed in the minds of other Arab leaders the correctness of their gradual drift toward moderation and closer relations with Western countries, including the United States, a trend which eventually could result in de facto, or even formal, settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. These setbacks, no doubt, contributed to Gorbachev's tough stance when the Polish situation unfolded in March. Still, because the U.S. role in the brief crisis was minimal as well, the favorable outcome did little to benefit the moderate American administration, whose foreign policies were then thoroughly discredited in any event when the Polish crisis emerged a few months later.

- 4) *Africa*: Most of the African continent remained desperately poor and dependent upon Western aid to survive. A number of nations suffered chronic internal conflicts; most reflected the artificiality of national boundaries, but some in the south were due to Pretoria's deliberate policy of keeping its neighbors off balance. Within South Africa, violence continued sporadically but the black opposition was divided and infiltrated by the security apparatus, and seemed to pose no real threat to the continuance of white rule. Moreover, although the

government of South Africa was isolated and official ties with most countries virtually non-existent, enough international business took place under the table--combined with the country's own rich resources--to permit the whites to continue to live in sufficient comfort to convince most of them to stay and fight.

- 5) *Latin America:* Most countries in the Western Hemisphere also were sufficiently dependent upon economic ties with the industrialized west, and particularly with the United States, to seek cooperative political relations and to create an atmosphere in which private investment and trade could flourish. U.S. aid to moderate governments threatened by Cuban and Soviet supported insurgencies was relatively effective. Democratic processes had continued in Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras despite the continuation of relatively low levels of internal violence. A new insurgency seemed to be developing in Brazil's impoverished northeast, but had made only limited progress.

U.S. aid to the "Contras" also had beneficial effects. About one-fourth of Nicaragua had been under their effective control since about 1989, when a provisional government had been established at Santa Clara, near the Honduran border. The Sandinistas had proven resilient, particularly with the assistance of growing numbers of Cubans and their assumption of greater roles in managing and even fighting the war, but by the mid-1990s their remaining positions--even in Managua itself--were clearly threatened. It seemed only a matter of time before the increasingly unpopular regime would be forced to flee.

## SUMMARY

By the end of 1996, the U.S. position in the third world was quite strong, while that of the Soviet Union was weak. The basic Western economic strength had led most countries, particularly those in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East to be disposed to cooperate with the United States in order to create an atmosphere in which economic relations could prosper. Moreover, a Soviet ally had suffered a disastrous defeat in the Middle East (not for any fault of the U.S.S.R.), and Soviet clients were losing contests in Central America and southern Africa. Soviet troops themselves were demonstrating an inability to control the insurgency in Afghanistan. The U.S.S.R. retained a strong position only in India and Vietnam. Elsewhere in Asia, although the U.S. position in East Asia had been weakened by the crisis with Japan and the inability to develop close security ties with China, the Soviet Union had not gained from these problems; a more or less independent power center appeared to be emerging.

In their direct relations and in Europe, the great powers seemed to have reverted to a situation analogous to the cold war of the 1950s. The internal politics of both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. were dominated by hard-line factions. Each had resumed close control of its allies in Europe--the U.S.S.R. through repression and military intervention, the U.S. as a result of the consequences of those actions on European politics. Both great powers had accelerated military deployments, particularly of nuclear forces, and had initiated programs to deploy missile defense systems. The stage was set for confrontation.

## **CRISES AND CONFRONTATION, 1997-2005**

The trends and conditions which had become apparent by the middle of the 1990s and, in particular, the deterioration of the relative position of the U.S.S.R., together with the consistently aggressive attitude displayed by the United States, played a dominant role in the development of events in the decade which followed. As Soviet leaders sought solutions to increasingly serious problems relating both to their external relations and to the internal cohesion of the Soviet Union, a number of ongoing situations which had heretofore been kept under control erupted into open conflict.

### **Soviet Defeat in Latin America**

The shifting power balance between the great powers was first apparent in Latin America, a region where U.S. geographical advantages were the greatest.

One of the top foreign policy priorities of the new conservative American administration which was inaugurated in January 1997 was the successful conclusion of the prolonged U.S.-backed effort to overthrow the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. As it happened, this desire on the part of the president coincided with a decisive turning point in the military situation. Having grown steadily in strength while the government forces grew weaker, the Nicaraguan guerrillas were in a position to launch a major offensive in the winter of 1996-97.

By this time, the rebel forces had received from the United States sufficient heavy weaponry, of which the most important were sophisticated antiair and antiarmor missiles, to engage Sandinista regulars in large-scale battles. The key town of Matagalpa fell in February 1997. At the same time, "Contra" forces advancing from the south threatened the Atlantic port of Bluefields and, indeed, the entire eastern coastal region of Nicaragua. These coordinated advances posed a direct threat to the road network linking Managua with

the rest of the country; the risk of the capital being cut-off entirely became a real and present one.

In addition to the military threat, the latest "Contra" advance led to a sharp deterioration in economic conditions in those areas still controlled by the government's armed forces. The most basic items of food and other staples were scarce and expensive, while imported goods such as medicines and machinery disappeared entirely. In the rebel-controlled areas, by contrast, American humanitarian assistance fueled a considerable economic revival. As a result of these developments, support for the government among the civilian population of Managua, which had been swollen by the influx of refugees from the countryside, plummeted, and desertion from the Sandinista Army became a major problem for the first time.

In this desperate position, the regime in Managua appealed for additional "fraternal assistance" from Cuba and the Soviet Union. In making these requests, it seems that the Sandinista commanders did indeed expect to receive some form of direct assistance from the Soviet Union, as well as additional support from Cuba. Cuban troops, after all had been employed in Nicaragua since the late 1980s, with the Soviets presumably footing the bill. A second purpose of Managua's action, however, was clearly to deter the United States from intervening directly by raising the threat of a direct great power confrontation if such an intervention took place.

Unfortunately for the survival of their regime, President Ortega and his colleagues were mistaken in their analysis of the likely behavior of both great powers. While the Soviet Union showed no inclination to come to the rescue of the Sandinistas, the United States took quick and forceful action to ensure that no aid from any source reached Managua. Only Fidel Castro lived up to the Sandinistas' expectations, or at least attempted to. In a spectacular move, Castro himself flew to Managua where he made a public declaration of "eternal solidarity" with the Sandinista regime. More concretely, U.S. intelligence information indicated that large numbers of Cuban troops were being readied for deployment to Nicaragua, where they would reinforce the estimated 20,000 Cubans already fighting for the Sandinista regime.

It is at this point that the shift in the policy of the U.S. government became apparent. Whereas previous administrations had always sought to avoid exposing U.S. forces to the risk of combat in Central America, limiting their use to training exercises and advisory roles, the new president chose the path of direct confrontation. A U.S. naval task force,



including two carrier battle groups, a Marine amphibious unit, and an undisclosed number of submarines were stationed off the eastern coast of Nicaragua. Its mission, as publicly stated by the president, was to prevent any reinforcement of the Managua regime from Cuba. The presence of the Marine unit with the task force also presented the implicit threat of U.S. intervention within Nicaragua itself.

The presence of the U.S. task force led to conflict almost from the time of its arrival. Initially, this took the form of air clashes between American and Cuban-piloted aircraft, which resulted in the downing of half a dozen Cuban planes over a three-week period between late February and early March. On the 10th of March, a much more serious incident took place, as U.S. air and surface craft engaged and sank a Cuban submarine.

Following this demonstration of U.S. intentions, the policy priorities of the Cuban government shifted abruptly. Clearly, the large-scale transfer of troops from Cuba to Nicaragua would be impossible without triggering a major confrontation with the United States. Cuba by itself was unequal to such a risk. The Soviets, for their part, informed the Cubans privately that the U.S.S.R. had no intention of involving its forces in combat with the United States in conditions so obviously favorable to the enemy. Rather than seeking to increase the level of his involvement in Central America, thus, Castro suddenly realized that in the present circumstance there was every reason to fear for the survival of Cuban forces already in Nicaragua. These fears seemed justified when, in mid-March, the "Contra" offensive was resumed, this time with Managua as its target.

Realizing their peril, the Cubans prepared to abandon Nicaragua to its fate. Secret negotiations between U.S. and Cuban envoys in Costa Rica resulted in a tacit agreement between the two countries by which U.S. forces would not interfere with the air and naval movements necessary to withdraw Cuban personnel from Nicaragua. The withdrawal was underway by late March and virtually completed by the end of April.

With the departure of the Cubans, the last faint hope for the survival of the Sandinista regime disappeared. Faced with open popular revolt in Managua and the wholesale desertion of even elite troops, Daniel Ortega and his closest advisors fled by air to Cuba on April 27th. On the next day, "Contra" forces entered the city; Nicaragua's Sandinista episode was closed.

The impact of the Sandinista's defeat went far beyond Managua. Not surprisingly, it was felt especially strongly in Havana. Political tension had been brewing in the Cuban capital for some time. The chief source of antagonism was the growing conflict between

Castro and his political associates on the one hand, and the professional armed forces on the other. Ever since the late 1980s, opposition had been building among military field commanders to the seemingly open-ended commitment of Cuban troops to foreign wars, first in Southern Africa and then in Central America. So long as these enterprises were seen to be successful, and so long as Soviet backing and support was assured, this opposition did not reach politically significant levels. Recent experience in Africa, however, cast increasing doubts on these points. After twenty years of involvement in Angola and Mozambique, Cuban forces were still encountering effective opposition from South African-backed guerrilla groups. Far from a revolutionary enterprise, the Cuban role in Africa had settled into unending garrison duty which resulted in a steady stream of casualties and serious disaffection among troops and officers. The benefit of Cuba's military effort were reaped by the Soviet Union, which obtained access to strategically located countries, while Cuba itself, in the view of many members of the Cuban armed forces, got little or nothing.

The Nicaraguan debacle brought these feelings to a head. It now seemed clear that Castro's "adventurism" risked the most serious consequences for Cuba and that the Soviets could not be counted on to come to the rescue if needed. Further, the indecision and abrupt policy shifts which marked the latter stages of the Nicaraguan crisis seemed to indicate a dangerous lack of vision and foresight at top political levels. Even the political leadership of the armed forces concluded that change was necessary.

Faced with this challenge, the aging Fidel Castro was unable to employ his time-tested charisma to rally support. Rather than risk a potentially disastrous showdown with his own army, the Cuban leader agreed to give up real power and retire to a purely symbolic role. The decision was announced to the Cuban public on the 21st of June, 1997. The official reason given for this move, Castro's ill health, was, in fact not entirely untrue. U.S. intelligence sources reported that the former leader was suffering from a progressively debilitating, although unspecified illness, and that this probably had accounted in part for the relative ease with which he had acceded to demands that he leave power.

Even in the final moments of his career, however, Fidel Castro retained sufficient influence to affect the choice of a successor. Presumably as part of his agreement to step down without confrontation, he convinced Party and military leaders to accept his brother Raoul as the next Cuban leader. The armed forces, recognizing the advantages of apparent continuity, accepted this choice, although Raoul was known to be unpopular with many

influential officers. This very lack of a natural base of support, in fact, may have encouraged top military leaders to offer Raoul Castro their conditional support, knowing that he would be dependent on them for power in a way which his brother had never been. The price for this support became clear after only a few months, when Raoul Castro announced that Cuban troops would leave Africa by the end of 1998.

It should be noted in passing that the withdrawal of Cuban troops did not, as some had believed it might, lead to the immediate collapse of the governments of Angola or Ethiopia. It did, however, relieve considerably the military pressure on rebel groups in these countries, bringing them closer to a condition of de facto partition.

Ironically, the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Africa and Central America exacerbated the country's social and political problems rather than calming them. Returning troops, on the whole, were thoroughly disillusioned with the regime which had involved them in wars which they had never understood or supported. Further, Cuba's endemic economic woes made it extremely difficult for many of these young men to find steady employment when they were discharged from the Army. As a result, the "Africans," as the veterans became known, formed a coherent group of idle and disaffected men with extensive military experience--a situation ready-made for subversion and violence.

This point did not go unnoticed in Washington. The American administration, fresh from its triumph in Nicaragua, made no secret of its desire eventually to "liberate" Cuba, and the fall of Fidel Castro was seen as a clear sign that Cuba was ripe for such an event. While the president did not consider the use of U.S. military power to be feasible in this case, the level of U.S.-backed subversive activity within Cuba was increased considerably after 1997. Judging the Cuban economy to be the country's most vulnerable point, the various covert agencies of the U.S. government concentrated initially on acts of economic sabotage. As social conditions in Cuba deteriorated, rumors of insurgencies in the remote mountain regions of the island began circulating. Initially, armed opposition to the Havana regime consisted only of isolated groups of veterans and other displaced individuals who took to the hills in order to flee from the authorities. Before long, however, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency had made contact with these groups and was providing them with support and advice. By 1999, the initial rebel groups had been joined by C.I.A.-trained Cuban exiles and were engaging in organized attacks against government positions. Although the actual military threat posed by these rebels was slight, the psychological impact of their existence on the already shaky Cuban government was great. Party and

military officials engaged in public recriminations over who was to blame for the situation, and Raoul Castro's ability to arbitrate between the two groups clearly proved inadequate.

To make matters worse, Soviet economic support, upon which the entire Cuban economy depended, had been shrinking steadily. In retrospect, it seems that Soviet leaders had greatly underestimated the seriousness of the Cuban situation. Preoccupied with their own catastrophic economy and with growing problems in Eastern Europe, it did not occur to the Kremlin that its strategic position in Cuba could be threatened so directly. Accordingly, as scarce economic resources were urgently required elsewhere, support for Cuba was allowed to decline.

Regardless of Soviet motives, the impact of their actions--or rather of their lack of action--is clear. As the Cuban economy deteriorated, opposition to the government in general and to the Party bureaucracy, represented by Raoul Castro, grew. Acts of terrorism multiplied in the cities while, in the countryside, the various insurgent groups began to work together and win control over cohesive stretches of territory. By the late months of the year 2000, the prospect of open civil war was a very real one.

Taking stock of the situation in December 2000, Cuba's top military leaders realized that the present government was doomed. No organized political opposition existed, however, which might form an alternative. The urban terrorists and the various C.I.A.-backed armed bands were united only in their opposition to the regime. Only the Army itself retained a measure of cohesion and effectiveness. The conclusion to which this reasoning led was obvious. The military itself must take power if chaos was to be avoided. Equally obvious was the conclusion that, in the long run, only an opening to the West could restore economic prosperity and political stability to Cuba.

On January 1, 2001, on the occasion of the celebration of the 42nd anniversary of the Cuban revolution, Raoul Castro and the leaders of the Communist Party were overthrown in a bloodless coup, and a three-man military junta was named as Cuba's provisional government. The generals' first act after securing power was to repudiate Cuba's military treaties with the Soviet Union and to announce that all Soviet personnel would be expelled. At the same time, the provisional government expressed a desire to renew diplomatic ties with the United States and indicated that economic assistance from any source was urgently needed. Needless to say, the U.S. government was not slow to take up Cuba's offer: emergency aid was en route to Havana within ten days of the coup.

The Soviets, for their part, were left with little choice but to acquiesce to a situation which had abruptly and, from their point of view, inexplicably slipped from their control. The near-unanimity of the Cuban armed forces in support of the new regime, and the all-too-obvious willingness of the United States to offer it military support if needed, left Moscow without a military option. In the most significant diplomatic reversal suffered by the Soviet Union in the post-war era, all Soviet personnel were gone from Cuba by May 2001, by which time the country was well on its way to re-integration in the Western economic zone.

### **Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.**

The "loss" of Cuba triggered a violent crisis at the highest levels of Soviet leadership. The tacit power-sharing agreement among the Communist Party chiefs, military leaders, and security organs, which had been in place since 1992, was shaken as the several parties indulged in a round of recriminations over who was to blame for this latest stunning defeat. The most intense debate took place between the conservative ideologues, who dominated the Party apparatus, and the military commanders. The latter accused the Party of "adventurism" and overreaching in its attempts to assert Soviet influence--and thus engage Soviet prestige--in distant countries which could not be controlled by Soviet military power. This practice not only had left the U.S.S.R. vulnerable to such humiliating defeats as had been suffered in Cuba, they argued, but also led to problems closer to home being ignored. In making this last charge, military leaders pointed in particular to the deteriorating situation in Eastern Europe, where neither the Soviet party nor local communist parties seemed able to stem the growing tide of popular discontent.

Party leaders, for their part, attacked the military for failing to protect Soviet interests, despite the fact that it absorbed a huge proportion of available resources. Cuba, they pointed out, was hardly a recent "adventure" but a Soviet ally of 40 years standing and of tremendous strategic, as well as political, significance. Yet, the military and intelligence forces had neither predicted the severity of the crisis in that country nor acted effectively to control it. Despite all of their sophisticated military hardware, the armed forces had proven unable to protect a vital Soviet interest.

Initially, the security agencies stayed out of the internal conflict. When it became clear that a prompt solution to the controversy would not be found, however, they found it necessary to intervene. While the leaders of the various Soviet security agencies were closer politically to the Party ideologues than to the military, they were above all highly

pragmatic men. In the present situation, they agreed with the soldiers that the Soviet Union must concentrate on matters close to home, namely in Eastern Europe, and that strong and direct methods of restoring social discipline were needed. Further, the political evolution of the United States indicated to the military and security forces alike that a renewed Soviet military effort would be needed in order to keep up with what promised to be an ever-increasing challenge from the United States.

The outcome of this secret power struggle was known to outsiders only gradually. The Soviet Communist Party was once again purged, as the conservative ideologues followed Gorbachev's "modernists" into disgrace. While the position of Secretary General was retained by the same individual, he was generally regarded as a figurehead; real power was wielded by a coalition of military and K.G.B. leaders in the Politburo.

By late 2002, the general outlines of the policy which would be followed by the new leaders could be discerned. Military spending rose above the already high levels of previous years, with the bulk of the new investment going to strategic forces--defensive as well as offensive--and to ground forces destined for use in Europe. By far the most visible change in policy, however, was in the line taken towards Eastern Europe. Rather than depending on the various allied governments to keep their populations in line, the Kremlin's new leaders soon showed a tendency to employ Soviet security, and even regular military, forces on a routine basis to restore order.

In the mind of Soviet leaders, such drastic actions were justified by the continuing deterioration of conditions in Eastern Europe. After the Polish troubles of 1991, the Soviet Union had hoped that the situation in Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe would gradually calm down, as had been the case following the uprisings of 1981, but this had not taken place. Instead, conditions had remained very bad in Poland and had begun to deteriorate in the rest of Eastern Europe. At the heart of this problem was the policy followed by the Soviets and their East European allies after 1991, and in particular the abrupt cutting of ties between Eastern and Western Europe. In the 1980s, growing East-West economic relations had permitted a significant improvement in economic conditions in the east. This tenuous prosperity collapsed after 1991, and all of Eastern Europe fell into a severe economic depression.

By Soviet standards, economic conditions in the Warsaw Pact countries did not seem unacceptable. To the populations of these countries, however, the contrast between the standard of living which they had glimpsed in the 1980s and the poverty to which they now

seemed condemned indefinitely was stark and unappealing. As a result, discontent grew steadily in those countries which, before 1991, had been the wealthiest and most stable: Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and--most ominously--East Germany. Over the course of the 1990s, acts of economic sabotage became more frequent, and voluntary cooperation by citizens with governments disappeared almost entirely, to be replaced by widespread passive resistance interspersed with sporadic spontaneous protests.

Direct Soviet intervention, which became ever more frequent after 1991, only made matters worse by transforming what had been a rather vague, although widespread, discontent into focused, and increasingly militant, anti-Soviet sentiments. The methods of opposition also changed. Open marches and popular demonstrations, which had formed the heart of movements such as Solidarity, were abandoned in the face of the harsh repression with which they were met. Instead, beginning in 1992, visible symbols of Soviet presence in Eastern Europe, particularly those relating to military forces, became the targets of an increasingly sophisticated campaign of terrorist-style attacks; bombings and industrial sabotage became common in East European capitals.

The first reaction of the Soviet Union to this ominous development was to blame it on the work of Western intelligence agencies. In this assessment, they were not entirely wrong. U.S. and West European covert activity in Eastern Europe increased throughout this period. Soviet leaders failed to realize, however, that their own tactics had much more to do with their problems than any outside agitation. As opposition became more violent, increasing use was made of Soviet troops for police and security duty in Eastern Europe. In addition to continuing the escalating cycle of violence, this tactic backfired in two important ways.

The constantly increasing number of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe was seen in the West as a direct threat to NATO. While demographic factors made it impossible for the Europeans to increase the number of their forces to match the Soviets, they could and did take a number of other actions. The readiness of all troops in Europe was steadily increased from 1993 onward by such means as increasing war reserve stocks and strengthening the reserve structure of West European armed forces. The development and procurement of new weapon systems was also accelerated. The U.S., for its part, began carrying out a phased build-up of its forces in Europe so that by 2004 the equivalent of six full U.S. divisions were present in Europe. At the same time, U.S. defense industries began to expand production in a calculated effort on the part of the government to move the country closer to a position in which it could sustain a major conflict.

The second adverse effect of the Soviet crack-down in Eastern Europe was its impact on the Soviet Army itself. Soviet combat troops, forced into a security role for which they were neither trained nor equipped, soon grew disenchanted. Western intelligence sources reported a sharp increase in discipline problems among Soviet troops, as well as a renewed high rate of alcoholism and drug use. The most destabilizing aspect of this problem in the long run, however, was the exposure of young Soviet soldiers to the revolutionary situation developing in Poland and elsewhere. Upon returning at the conclusion of their military tours, Soviet conscripts were not slow to note the many similarities between conditions in Eastern Europe and at home. This was true especially of the troops which came from the non-Russian areas of the western Soviet Union. By the end of 1993, the first scattered acts of industrial sabotage on the East European model were beginning to take place in the Ukraine and the Baltic States.

Soviet military leaders noted these developments, of course, but they were far too committed to their present course of action to draw true lessons from them. Instead, they responded by further strengthening the U.S.S.R.'s military posture--a move which confirmed Western fears and led to the gradual mobilization of European, as well as U.S., war industries. As both sides pursued their military build-ups, the consequences of the situation were also felt on the political and popular level. For the first time since the 1950s the prospect of war in Europe began to seem real, not only to military planners, but to ordinary citizens in both the East and the West. Official pronouncements of both the American and Soviet governments encouraged this belief. By 2002 the two governments had dropped even the pretense of peaceful coexistence and had confined their communications to accusations and invectives delivered before third parties.

In the early months of 2004 a new security problem was added to those already faced by Soviet leaders. The source of this threat was not Eastern Europe, but Central Asia. Ever since 1979, guerrilla forces in Afghanistan had fought Soviet occupation forces to a draw, inflicting a steady stream of casualties and preventing the Soviets from securing effective control of the rural parts of the country. Since the mid-1990s, the Mujaheddin had demonstrated the ability to carry out occasional raids into the U.S.S.R. itself. In the years which followed 2002, this situation took a radical turn for the worse. Increased support from the United States, as well as from the radical Islamic regime in Tehran, enabled the Afghan Mujaheddin to expand the scope of their operations. At the same time, the deteriorating situation in Eastern Europe forced the Soviet Union to reduce its troop level in Afghanistan, and also in Soviet Central Asia, to deal with problems in the West.



The result was a dramatic increase in the success of the Mujaheddin within Afghanistan. By 2004, only Kabul and a handful of other strongly defended military strongholds were in Soviet hands. Further, the Islamic propaganda spread by the Mujaheddin was beginning to have a noticeable impact on the populations of the Soviet Central Asian republics, where anti-Russian sentiment was beginning to find expression in the sort of violent manifestations which were occurring in the Ukrainian and Baltic Republics.

The situation reached a crisis point in March 2004 when the Mujaheddin carried out a spectacular series of raids on military facilities inside the Soviet Union. While isolated incidents of this sort had occurred in the past, these attacks differed both in scope and impact from any previous actions. Further, the precision and timing of these operations convinced Soviet authorities that they could have only been carried out with local assistance in intelligence gathering--if not in actual execution. In the opinion of Soviet military planners, they were a forerunner of what could become a serious and lengthy conflict inside the Soviet Union--a situation which could on no account be tolerated. For the embattled leaders in Moscow, this was the last straw. Pushed to their limit in Europe, they could not afford major ongoing security problems in Asia. Unlike events in Europe, however, an indirect but potentially effective solution to the Asian problem presented itself to Soviet leaders.

### **The U.S.S.R. Provokes Indo-Pakistani Conflict**

Soviet hopes for a resolution of the Afghan problem, and its spill-over effects in the Soviet Union itself, were based on the independent evolution of events in South Asia, namely the steadily worsening relations between India and Pakistan. Since the Pakistani nuclear test in 1991, the two countries had been engaged in a barely veiled nuclear and conventional arms race. Despite Pakistan's best efforts and, after 1996, covert support for its nuclear program from the United States, the vastly greater resources available to India ensured that it maintained overall military superiority over its rival, at least in the opinion of outside observers. Whether this assessment was shared by Pakistani authorities remained unclear.

The importance of this situation for the Soviet Union lay in the fact that Pakistan was the vital link between the Afghan Mujaheddin and the outside world--and in particular between the Afghans and their American suppliers. The collapse, or even the neutralization

of Pakistan would radically alter the balance of power in Afghanistan, allowing the Soviets to regain the upper hand.

In April and May 2004, a number of terrorist attacks were carried out against Indian military positions and political leaders. As expected, the Indian government blamed these on Pakistani-backed extremists and threatened retribution if they were not halted at once. In fact, the attacks were the work of Soviet agents, and part of a concerted Soviet effort to provoke an Indo-Pakistani confrontation. In pursuit of this goal, Soviet intelligence agencies also saw to it that information pointing to Indian preparations for war "accidentally" fell into the hands of the Pakistani government.

In the tense atmosphere which reigned over the subcontinent, both governments took the Soviet bait and, before long, further provocation was unnecessary as the crisis took on a momentum of its own. Indian mobilization orders and troop movements, which were intended by New Delhi as a precautionary measure, were interpreted in Islamabad as the beginning of the war preparation of which Pakistan had been "warned." Pakistan responded by putting its own armed forces on maximum alert and readying its stock of nuclear weapons for use.

In the weeks that followed, sectarian rioting broke out in the Indian Punjab and on both sides of the demarcation line in the disputed province of Kashmir. Trouble was also reported in northwestern Pakistan between Afghan refugees and the native population. India and Pakistan blamed each other for these outbreaks, which were probably caused by a combination of Soviet agitation and genuine local tensions and ethnic hatreds.

As the situation on the subcontinent built to the crisis point, the Soviet Union moved into the second phase of its plan and launched a major air and ground offensive into Afghanistan. This action differed from previous Soviet operations not only in its scale but by the fact that all pretense of carrying out the occupation or pacification of an allied country was dropped. No Afghan troops were involved in the offensive, which included the widespread use of chemical weapons and herbicides. The Soviets' goal seemed to be not so much to defeat the Mujaheddin in combat as to so devastate their chief areas of operation as to make them incapable of sustaining populations of any sort, combatants or otherwise. Western observers agreed that, carried out with sufficient ruthlessness, such a policy would be successful, at least in the short run. Long-term success depended on denying the Mujaheddin access to sanctuaries in Pakistan to which they could repair and

from which they could draw sustenance while their homes were undergoing the Soviets' scorched-earth attack.

The U.S.S.R.'s covert activities in India and Pakistan were designed to accomplish just this, although it is not clear whether Soviet planners actually intended to provoke open war between the two South Asian countries or whether they hoped to use the threat of a joint Soviet-Indian attack to coerce the Pakistanis into abandoning the Mujaheddin. On the third of June, 2004, such conjecture became moot. The Pakistani government, concluding that Indian, and possibly Soviet, attack was imminent, decided that its only hope lay in preemption. Such a move, it was hoped, might even the odds sufficiently to force the Indians to negotiate. Just after dawn, Pakistani aircraft launched a half dozen nuclear weapons against Indian troop formations massing near the border, resulting in enormous casualties. The results hoped for by Pakistan, however, did not materialize. Instead, the Indians chose to answer with prompt and massive retaliation. Within hours of the Pakistani strikes, nuclear-armed, medium-range missiles launched from India destroyed a number of targets inside Pakistan, including the presumed site of Pakistan's nuclear processing facilities, major air bases, and military command centers in and around the capital. These last strikes involved large numbers of civilian casualties, and resulted essentially in the destruction of Islamabad.

The result of these attacks was total chaos in the Pakistani leadership. A number of top political and military figures, including the country's president, had been killed, and communications were disrupted to a point where surviving field commanders were left without orders or information. Further, the attacks on Pakistan's air bases had left India with near-total command of the air. In such a situation it is hardly surprising that when Indian ground forces launched a series of armored thrusts into the Pakistani Punjab, beginning on the 4th, the retreat of Pakistani forces quickly became a total rout.

The United States was horrified at this development, but found its options severely limited. The speed and extent of the Indian counterattack ruled out any attempt to employ military power to come to the aid of Pakistan. In any case, American public and political opinion was sharply critical of Pakistan's decision to initiate the use of nuclear weapons and little support would have existed for a U.S. "rescue" of the Islamabad regime even if such a move had been possible. Despite these problems, the United States attempted to demonstrate that it retained the capacity to influence events. U.S. conventional forces throughout the world were put on their highest levels of alert. Nuclear weapons having already been employed by the belligerents, the U.S. also increased the alert level of its

strategic nuclear forces. The only movement of forces, however, was the deployment of two carrier task forces from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean, ostensibly to protect U.S. citizens and interests. In fact, U.S. leaders realized that American plans and activities in South and Central Asia had suffered a major, perhaps a definitive, set-back. Although the details of Soviet manipulation were not known, the implications for U.S. interests in Afghanistan, as well as Pakistan, were well understood.

At this point, the Indian government wisely chose not to pursue military activities further into Pakistan, which would have risked exposing its troops to attack from irregular or partisan forces. Instead, the Indian Army withdrew to its own side of the border and waited for some form of organization to emerge from the confusion in Pakistan. By June 7th, the acting commander-in-chief of the Pakistani Army had regained some measure of control over his forces. It was clear, however, that they were in no condition to pursue hostilities. Pakistan had little choice but to accept whatever terms were proposed.

What was proposed was not a bilateral peace agreement between India and Pakistan, but rather a "Regional Security Pact" which would also include Afghanistan--and by implication, although not officially, the Soviet Union. A conference to draft this "Pact" was convened in New Delhi on June 10th. The demands presented to Pakistan at the opening of the conference fulfilled the worst fears of the U.S. government, as well as demonstrating once and for all the depth of the collusion between India and the Soviet Union. First on the list of conditions for peace was that Pakistan expel all Afghan refugees, and then close its border with Afghanistan. Pakistan was also required to renounce its military ties with the United States and adopt a policy of strict neutrality. Following these demands, almost as an afterthought, were the issues which had allegedly started the Indo-Pakistani war in the first place. Pakistan agreed to abandon its nuclear program, both civil and military, and to refrain from any interference in Indian ethnic politics.

The Pakistani representative in New Delhi obviously had little choice but to sign the document presented to him. It was relevant to ask, however, whether he in fact represented any actual government. In all of Pakistan, only the Army retained even a semblance of national organization. Its credit with the population as a whole, however, was virtually nil following the unmitigated disaster which had resulted from its decision to initiate hostilities. Numerous political, religious, and ethnic groups throughout the country were in upheaval and a series of violent confrontations seemed inevitable.

From the point of view of the Soviet Union, the operation was a clear success. Pakistan had been eliminated as a cohesive source of support for the Afghan rebels and closed as a route for their resupply. Soviet representatives made it clear to the leaders of the Pakistani Army that they would be allowed to remain in power only so long as they worked to implement the New Delhi agreement, a threat which Soviet control over a number of the most dangerous Pakistani opposition groups made eminently plausible. In any case, the pro-Western policy of the former Pakistani government, which had never been widely popular, was now thoroughly discredited. In addition, ethnic and economic rivalries in northern Pakistan had left the Afghan refugees there isolated and unpopular. While many of the factions contending for power clamored loudly, if incoherently, for revenge against India, therefore, none called for a continuation of ties with the U.S. or came to the defense of the Afghan refugees as these were expelled from the country. By the end of 2004, Soviet objectives in South and Central Asia were well on the way to being achieved.

#### **GREAT POWER CONFRONTATION IN EUROPE, 2004-2005**

The price for this Soviet victory was great. International reaction to the brutal devastation in Afghanistan was swift and overwhelmingly negative. Not only the United States and its NATO allies, but the nations of East Asia and the third world condemned Soviet action, although India managed to distance itself from Soviet actions in Afghanistan, and explained its resort to nuclear weapons by pointing out that it had, in fact, been attacked first. The U.S.S.R. was prepared to stand up against world opinion. Considerably more dangerous was the impact of the crisis on military dispositions in Europe.

The fighting in South Asia had been over too quickly for the United States to come to the aid of Pakistan, although the president claimed that the administration would have done so had it been possible. As it was, the United States responded by putting its forces around the world, and most especially in Europe, on a war footing. More important in the long term, the industrial mobilization which had already begun in all of the NATO countries was confirmed and accelerated. Soviet willingness to manipulate events, as well as the potential for brutality of the Soviet armed forces themselves had been dramatically demonstrated, and the possibility of war was accordingly taken more seriously than ever in Europe.

Perhaps the most damaging consequence of the South Asian operation for the interests of the Soviet Union was its impact on the policies and perspectives of the Soviet leaders themselves. Military chiefs saw the successful action against the Mujaheddin as a vindication of the "direct" tactics which they had long sought to impose, and prepared to apply them to the ongoing problem in Eastern Europe.

In November 2004, Soviet military government was imposed on a number of the most conflict-torn East-European districts, by-passing local and national authorities entirely. Sixty years after the conclusion of the Second World War, the Red Army had once again resumed the posture of an army of occupation. Areas affected by this program included, among others, the Polish cities of Gdansk and Krakow, and all of the ultra-critical region along the intra-German border.

This last desperate attempt to restore order was an unmitigated disaster for the U.S.S.R. Within the so-called military zones, all productive activity came to a halt, throwing the already shaky economies of Eastern Europe into total chaos. Open conflict between the population and Soviet troops intensified and, as in 1991-92, desertion from East European armies became a major problem. In the winter of 2004, however, the Red Army itself was no longer immune to this problem.

A natural consequence of the choices made by the Soviet Union was the total breakdown of any semblance of legitimate national government in Eastern Europe. Middle and lower level Party cadres melted away seemingly without a trace, causing local government to disappear even in the areas where it had not been abolished by the Soviets. National Party leaders in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary were placed under virtual house arrest by their Soviet military "advisors" to prevent them from resigning or defecting outright. Their influence, in any case, was insignificant. Top military and security leaders, well aware of their total dependence on Moscow, remained loyal. Their control over their troops, however, was increasingly nebulous, and the prospect of entire units of the Polish and East German armies defecting loomed ever larger in the eyes of Soviet commanders.

On top of this, long-held Soviet suspicions concerning Western aid to East European rebels were finally coming true, at least in East Germany. The U.S. and West German governments made no secret of their support for anti-Soviet forces in East Germany, and their intelligence and other covert forces were active in arming and advising various rebel groups. On a more visible level, clashes on the intra-German border, as well as on the

border between West Germany and Czechoslovakia, became increasingly frequent as West German forces sought to assist refugees attempting to flee to the West. In December 2004, U.S. forces were involved in such an incident for the first time, triggering a three-hour battle which involved several battalions of U.S. troops, including artillery and helicopters, and led to over a dozen American fatalities before it could be halted.

A second incident involving U.S. troops took place only 10 days later when the crew of a Polish freighter decided to defect to the West. The ship succeeded in reaching West German territorial waters before being intercepted by military forces, but when a Soviet destroyer and a number of East German coastal patrol craft arrived on the scene, they attempted to retrieve the defecting ship just the same. The Polish ship having been spotted previously by the West German Coast Guard, this violation of German territorial waters was noted and contested at once. West German patrol craft arrived on the scene within minutes only to be fired upon by the Soviet warship. The arrival of six U.S. tactical aircraft tipped the balance of the engagement and permitted the Polish ship to reach safety, but the incident resulted in the sinking of one of the West German patrol boats and in considerable damage to the Soviet destroyer, which was hit by several antiship missiles fired by the U.S. aircraft.

Following these incidents, all NATO countries joined the U.S. in placing their forces on maximum alert. Additional French and British troops were deployed into West Germany, and tactical and intermediate-range nuclear weapons were dispersed to their operational locations. Forces in the continental U.S. were also mobilized, and preparations were begun for the transfer of four additional divisions to Europe to reinforce the six already present there. It was estimated that this deployment would be completed by mid-February 2005.

Soviet leaders examining their position in the first days of 2005 found little to their liking. The most forceful efforts to pacify Eastern Europe were resulting only in a continuing deterioration of conditions, which were fast approaching open warfare in Poland and East Germany. Within the U.S.S.R., opposition to the government was once again manifest, and was spreading for the first time into ethnically Russian areas. Meanwhile, Western military moves made the possibility of a NATO attack a real one. Under present conditions, Soviet leaders were unanimous in their assessment that Soviet conventional forces, engaged as they were in security operations throughout Eastern Europe--and increasingly in the U.S.S.R.--would be unable to cope with such an attack.

Unanimity, however, did not extend to agreement on appropriate actions. The leaders of the security forces, with the backing of a few ideologues in the military hierarchy and what remained of the civilian Party apparatus, favored bold action. Only by neutralizing the threat from the West, they argued, could the situation in the East be brought under control. The so-called "lessons" of Afghanistan were put forth as backing for this position. Not until the Mujaheddin's foreign connections had been disrupted by the neutralization of Pakistan had Soviet forces been able to overcome their resistance. A similar situation, it was argued, existed in Eastern Europe. If the European members of NATO could be separated from their American sponsor, that is effectively neutralized, the various East European resistance movements would collapse. Even if they did not, Soviet military force could be applied as needed without fear of creating an opening for attack from the West.

Professional military leaders responded to these plans by pointing out that while the ultimate effects of such a policy might indeed be those projected by their proponents, the means to carry it out were lacking. It was patently absurd to imagine Soviet forces carrying an offensive into the West under present conditions.

This point had not escaped the backers of an aggressive policy. The solution to the impasse, for them, lay in use of the U.S.S.R.'s extensive arsenal of intermediate- and short-range nuclear systems. A nuclear first strike against Western Europe, they argued, would cripple NATO's military potential with one stroke, while the U.S.S.R.'s strategic forces, held in reserve, would deter a strategic response from the United States. In such a case, the political detachment of Europe from the United States would be a simple matter, and the security of Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. itself would be assured.

The leaders of the armed forces were deeply divided in their response to this proposal. The majority of senior commanders were irrevocably opposed. A number of younger staff officers, however, were convinced. Significantly, these men were much more aware of the opinions and perspectives of Soviet field officers, and realized more fully than their elders the extent to which the morale and effectiveness of Soviet conventional forces in Eastern Europe were disintegrating. Indeed, as field commanders learned of the ongoing policy debate through various unofficial contacts in the Kremlin, support among them for the nuclear option was strong.

Privately, a number of Soviet security chiefs took the reasoning in favor of nuclear attack one step farther. They calculated that given the state of Soviet air and missile defense



capability (in 2005, these included extensive ground-based defenses around Moscow and major ICBM and naval bases, as well as lighter defenses around other major cities), as well as the extensive Soviet system of civil defenses, a sufficient proportion of Soviet society and government--by which they meant themselves--would survive even a U.S. nuclear attack to enable the Soviet Union to prevail after a full strategic exchange. Prospective deployment of American space-based defenses, however, would soon put an end to this advantageous situation. In the minds of a small but powerful group of Soviet leaders, thus, the prospect of war with the United States, so long as it could be triggered soon, emerged as the most attractive option in admittedly desperate circumstances.

On January 15, 2005, the leaders of the chief security organs and their allies in the armed forces acted on their convictions. In a de facto palace revolution, the top military leaders who had opposed their view were arrested and deposed. The plotters were entirely successful in Moscow and in Eastern Europe. The Navy and Strategic Rocket Forces were also securely in the hands of the new regime. Elsewhere, however, things went less smoothly. Officers in the Soviet Far East remained loyal to their former commanders, and refused to recognize the new authorities in Moscow. More alarmingly, a number of military leaders in the non-Russian Republics of the western U.S.S.R. took the opportunity to break with Moscow entirely. Full-scale coups were attempted in Kiev and Vilnius, where the situation degenerated into confusion and violence.

For the new masters of the Kremlin, the chaos which followed their accession was taken as a sign that their plans must be carried out at once. On January 17th, without any warning whatsoever, over a hundred Soviet intermediate-range, nuclear-armed missiles were launched at military and logistical targets throughout Western Europe. While urban areas were not explicitly targeted, civilian casualties were estimated in the millions.

While governments and public alike were stunned at this attack, the political and military leaders of NATO agreed that the alliance had no choice but to retaliate in kind. Otherwise, Western Europe would be defenseless against invasion, even taking into account the fact that a large proportion, perhaps the bulk, of the Soviet Army was engaged in "pacifying" Eastern Europe. Twelve hours after the Soviet strike, thus, NATO responded with a nuclear attack of its own. French and British SLBMs were used to complement surviving NATO and French land based systems in a strike on military targets in Eastern Europe and the Western U.S.S.R.

## THE DISPOSITION OF FORCES IN JANUARY 2005

Before the Soviet attack, U.S. and NATO forces in Europe had been at an unprecedentedly high level in terms both of numbers and readiness. Six U.S. divisions had been in Europe for some years, and the transfer of four additional divisions was roughly half completed. Twelve additional wings of U.S. tactical aircraft had also been deployed to Europe.

Mobilization of the U.S. war industry, which had been underway for several years was further accelerated at this time. Even before this, it had reached a stage of development which would permit the rapid replacement of much of the material lost in the Soviet nuclear attack on U.S. forces in Europe.

On the Soviet side, Western intelligence agencies estimated that at least 40 Soviet divisions were located in Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia as of January 1, 2005, nearly double the 20 to 25 divisions which had been present in those countries until the late 1980s. A large, but unknown, proportion of these troops were engaged in security operations within those countries.

The actual combat potential of the two sides following the nuclear exchange initiated on January 15th, however, was far from these theoretical levels. On the Western side, losses of men and equipment had left NATO forces at 50 to 60 percent of pre-attack strength. Losses of aircraft, which had been emphasized in the Soviet targeting pattern, were generally higher. It was impossible to know the equivalent conditions in the East, but NATO analysts guessed that Soviet losses were roughly equivalent to those suffered by the West. It was generally assumed that the non-Soviet forces of the Warsaw pact were no longer viable; a large proportion, indeed, seemed to have been disarmed by the Soviets.

While only minimal conflict had taken place at sea as of January 15th, both great powers had long since deployed their fleets to forward positions. Five U.S. carrier battle groups were present in the North Atlantic, with two more in the Mediterranean. Four carrier groups in the Pacific and one in the Indian Ocean completed the deployment of U.S. surface forces. Following long-established U.S. naval doctrine, American attack submarines were ordered to seek out and engage Soviet SSBNs immediately after the initial Soviet nuclear strike on Europe. Soviet naval forces, for their part, seemed to be adopting a principally defensive strategy, concentrating forces in Soviet home waters and seeking to protect sea-based strategic assets.

In these conditions, a massive conventional offensive by the U.S.S.R. seemed highly unlikely in the short term. Given time, however, it was not inconceivable that Soviet forces would regain control of the situation in Eastern Europe and proceed to employ their superior reserve strength to overwhelm the weakened West. A prompt NATO offensive, on the other hand, might have a very real chance of freeing Eastern Europe from Soviet domination, and possibly of bringing about political change in the Soviet Union itself. The high state of readiness of troops in the United States, and the fact that U.S. sea-lift capacity was intact, made this move possible from a logistical standpoint. Such a course, however, presented the risk of triggering a Soviet strategic nuclear salvo. The men in the Kremlin had already demonstrated that they would strike first if threatened, and seemed willing to accept the prospect of a central nuclear exchange.

## **X. SCENARIO OMEGA: ASIAN WAR IN 2005**

In this scenario, we explore the possibility of a major U.S.-Soviet war in the year 2005. After more than a decade of intensifying confrontation, the two powers become involved in a major conflict when the Soviets move to seize the Arabian Peninsula. The naval and air conflict which ensues quickly spreads to East Asia, and leads eventually to a major land war in Manchuria and Korea.

The background to the conflict demonstrates the possible consequences of a continuation of existing socioeconomic trends in the developing world. Specifically, the last 15 years of the 20th Century are postulated to be marked by serious unrest in key third world countries, with Mexico and Egypt hardest hit. In the former, an economic collapse leads to civil war in the years 1998-2001; attempts to contain this problem effectively monopolize U.S. foreign policy during this period. In Egypt, torn by strife between Islamic fundamentalists and pro-Soviet leftist forces, a strongly anti-American government comes to power in the year 1995, precipitating a chain of events which, by 2005, leaves the entire Middle East in danger of Soviet occupation.

The scenario further postulates that the United States is effectively on its own in seeking to deal with these problems throughout the 1990s. The industrialized nations of Western Europe and East Asia are assumed to distance themselves from successive American administrations, seeking to maintain their domestic tranquility and prosperity by reducing military expenditures and by developing cooperative economic ties and political relationships with the Soviet Union. The break between the U.S. and Western Europe is assumed to be permanent, with the dissolution of NATO postulated to take place in 1999. In the first years of the new century, however, renewed cooperation with the nations of Northeast Asia provides new strategic opportunities for the United States, as well as an increased danger of U.S.-Soviet confrontation.

The principal events leading to U.S.-Soviet conflict in 2005 are outlined in the chronology below.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1988 U.S. assistance to the Nicaraguan "Contras" ended.
- 1988-94 Deteriorating economic conditions in Mexico and throughout Central America.
- 1988 Iranian forces capture Basra.
- 1989 U.S.S.R. intervenes in the Iran-Iraq war, allowing Iraq to regain territory captured by Iran; Soviet air and ground forces permanently stationed in Iraq.
- 1989-91 Increase in left-wing insurgency in Central America.
- 1990-95 Growing economic cooperation between Western Europe and the Soviet Union
- 1992 U.S. increases military assistance to Central American allies; resumes aid to the Nicaraguan "Contras."
- 1992-96 Increasing turmoil in Mexico; U.S. deploys military forces on Mexican border to deal with increased illegal immigration.
- 1992-00 Widespread factional fighting in Iran; Shi'ite extremists carry out terrorist attacks throughout the Gulf.
- 1994 Widespread allegations of fraud in Mexican presidential election.
- 1995 Left-wing coup in Cairo; Egypt breaks ties with the U.S. and agrees to close military cooperation with U.S.S.R.
- Jordan's King Hussein assassinated by pro-Syrian Palestinians.
- 1995-03 Rapid increase in Japanese defense spending and security preparations.
- 1996 Labour government elected in the United Kingdom, pledges to eliminate all nuclear forces from Britain.
- Military cooperation agreement between China, Japan, and South Korea.
- 1997 Left-wing coup in Mexico City; "Revolutionary Socialist Republic of Mexico" proclaimed; anti-communist forces regroup in northern Mexico and receive military assistance from the U.S.
- U.S.S.R. proposes to remove all Soviet and U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe; European NATO countries accept Soviet proposal despite strong U.S. objections.
- 1997-98 Civil war in Mexico; U.S. quarantine of leftist forces leads to clashes between U.S. and Cuban ships and aircraft.
- 1998 U.S.-backed forces retake Mexico City in September; remaining urban centers taken in following months.
- U.S. President announces that all U.S. forces will be withdrawn from Europe.
- Attempted coup by Shi'ite forces in Qatar defeated by Saudi intervention.
- Agreement-in-principle between China and Taiwan.
- 1999-01 Leftist forces in Mexico keep up guerrilla war in remote areas.
- Rapprochement between Iraq, Syria, and Jordan creates strong pro-Soviet block in the Middle East.
- 2000 Agreement between Saudi Arabia and the winning faction in Iran leads to a decrease of Shi'ite terrorism in the Gulf.
- 2000-05 Saudi Arabia increases support for Islamic fundamentalist forces fighting against pro-Soviet governments in the Middle East.
- 2004 Leftist coup in Kuwait; Kuwait occupied by Iraqi forces.
- Renewed security ties between U.S., Oman, and Saudi Arabia.
- 2004-05 Increased number of U.S. forces in Northeast Asia in response to Soviet build-up in Siberia.
- 2005 Soviet, Iraqi, and Egyptian forces attack Saudi Arabia; U.S. intervenes.
- Fighting in the Middle East leads to clashes between U.S. and Soviet naval forces.
- U.S. and Japanese forces attack Soviet Pacific naval bases; Chinese and South Korean forces attack the U.S.S.R. and North Korea.

## **THE EVOLUTION OF WORLD EVENTS: 1988-1992**

Conditions and events in the last years of the 1980s and the early 1990s set the stage for the more dramatic developments that were to follow. Indeed, many of the problems which faced U.S. foreign policy-makers in the first years of the 21st century can be traced back to this period. Of particular importance were trends towards increasing turmoil in Central America and the Middle East, and the growing differences between the United States and its industrial allies in Western Europe and East Asia.

### **The U.S. and Central America**

The principal foreign policy problems facing the United States in the late 1980s and early 1990s were centered in Central America and Mexico. At the root of much of the trouble in Central America lay the structural population and economic problems that had become apparent as early as the 1970s, but which had been compounded by active programs of destabilization carried out by the Soviets and their Cuban and Nicaraguan allies in the region. In addition to these problems, Mexico in particular suffered from internal tensions stemming from disparities between the north and south of the country and from a gradual erosion of the central government's political legitimacy.

U.S. assistance to the anti-Sandinista insurgents in Nicaragua, known as "Contras," had been curtailed severely in the late 1980s, due to public reactions to revelations of improprieties concerning the movement's funding and because of the increasingly pessimistic outlook for the "Contras" political or military success. Although the Nicaraguan resistance did not disappear altogether, the Sandinista regime in Managua largely succeeded in putting an end to "Contra" activity inside Nicaragua. Managua also increased support for long-established leftist insurgents in El Salvador and revived guerrilla organizations in Honduras and Guatemala. Eventually, this demonstrably aggressive behavior was a significant factor in bringing about a shift in U.S. public and congressional opinion.

The victory of a conservative candidate in the 1992 U.S. presidential election crowned this shift, and guaranteed that the U.S. would resume an activist policy in Central America. Military and economic aid to friendly Central American nations was increased substantially and, most importantly, U.S. military assistance to Nicaraguan insurgent groups was resumed at unprecedented levels. As a result, the revitalized "Contras" were once again able to carry out missions in the interior of Nicaragua, where their activities caused considerable economic disruption.

The Sandinistas responded to this development by increasing their own attacks against neighboring countries. The Nicaraguan Army regularly crossed into Honduras in pursuit of "Contra" forces, leading to clashes with the Honduran armed forces. The Hondurans, in turn, became more willing to challenge Nicaraguan border violations as U.S. aid increased their military capabilities. By the early months of 1994, U.S. military personnel were providing extensive logistical support not only for the Honduran Armed Forces, but also for those of El Salvador and Guatemala.

While the increased U.S. military presence did much to help Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador defend themselves against conventional military threats from Nicaragua, it also exacerbated internal conditions in these nations. Leftist insurgents remained active in each country, and assigned high priorities to terrorist attacks against U.S.-operated military facilities. Popular discontent stemming from the rising cost of the fighting in lives, and from its economic effects, aided Leftist forces in their increasingly successful efforts to mobilize popular support against local regimes and their American protectors. Faced with growing popular opposition, the armed forces of these Central American nations adopted harsher tactics, including forced relocations of entire villages away from the border area and other sensitive zones, thus fueling the escalating cycle of resentment and violence. By 1995, fighting was underway throughout Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Honduras, and violent incidents were increasingly common in Guatemala and even previously peaceful Costa Rica.

The late 1980s and early 1990s were also a time of economic crisis throughout Latin America. Low prices for the region's agricultural and other commodity exports, brought on by the general downturn in global economic conditions, were exacerbated by increasing protectionism in the U.S. and the continuing burden of indebtedness.

Nowhere were these problems more acute than in the largest Central American nation, Mexico. The crash in oil prices in 1985 had dealt the Mexican economy a blow from which it had never recovered. Faced with a huge foreign debt and shrinking export markets, Mexico entered the 1990s in a state of economic prostration. As prospects worsened, massive capital flight brought a virtual halt of new investment. Unemployment rose steadily, and only government subsidies for food and other basic necessities prevented large-scale deprivation. Such programs caused government spending to rise out of all proportion to revenues, however; the hyper-inflation which plagued Brazil and Argentina in the 1980s was a fixture of the Mexican economy by 1990.

One result of this situation was to accentuate the split between the relatively prosperous northern region of Mexico and the rest of the country. In the north, proximity to the United States created economic opportunities not available elsewhere. American- and Asian-owned factories and businesses located in Mexican border cities provided employment. Large numbers of Mexicans also continued to work in the United States, providing a steady stream of dollars which, as the Mexican Peso became increasingly devalued through inflation, became an openly-accepted currency throughout northern Mexico.

The economy of central and southern Mexico, however, including the capital city, enjoyed no such advantages. The fall in oil prices and the depressed international market for Mexico's other agricultural and mineral exports led to widespread unemployment, while hyper-inflation wiped out savings and pensions. The middle class, which had grown substantially during the prosperous times of the 1970s, saw its new-found economic security threatened, while living conditions for the poorest segments of society--the unemployed slum-dwellers of Mexico City and the landless peasants of southern and central rural districts--fell below even the minimum needed for subsistence.

These economic conditions had very definite political ramifications. In the north, U.S. political and cultural values and morals gained prestige by association with the visibly successful U.S. economy. Northern Mexicans grew increasingly restless with the undemocratic political system and centralized economic policy of the government in Mexico City, and came to regard the rest of the country as socially, as well as economically, backward.

In the central and southern portions of Mexico, by contrast, attitudes towards the United States grew increasingly negative during this period. Seeking to divert attention from its own limitations by appealing to Mexican patriotism, the government blamed "North American" and other foreign interests, particularly financial institutions, for Mexico's economic problems. While this position was widely accepted by the Mexican population, it did not lead to support for the government. Instead, the established institutions of the Mexican political system, of which the most important was the venerable "Institutional Revolutionary Party," commonly known by its Spanish acronym PRI, became increasingly less relevant.

Ostensibly an alliance of labor, peasant and "popular" forces, by the 1980s the PRI had become an instrument of domination by a small elite. The party received "popular



support" only from the bloated government bureaucracy and the highly unionized labor force of the nationalized industries. Political opposition was not allowed to grow in a normal way because of the PRI's stranglehold on the Mexican political system, particularly its ability to manipulate election results. Attempts to form "legitimate" opposition parties in the 1980s, such as the free-market oriented National Action Party (PAN), had only demonstrated the futility of such exercises. Accordingly, political opposition increasingly was channeled into more dangerous directions.

In the north, dissatisfaction with the central government was manifested principally by non-participation. The non-payment of taxes became routine, a practice aided by the accessibility of U.S. financial institutions and by the strength and breadth of the "informal" dollar economy. Business and community leaders wielded real power in northern cities and towns, while the representatives of the central government were either co-opted, bribed, or ignored.

In Mexico City and the rural south, a very different form of political opposition grew in the early 1990s. In these regions, the desperate economic situation had brought severe hardship for large numbers of people, and prepared fertile ground for the "revolutionary" propaganda of the far left. Ironically, the constant appeals made by the central government to the Mexican revolutionary tradition helped to speed up the process by which the ruling party and elite eventually would be destroyed.

The U.S.S.R. and its regional allies were not slow to perceive and take advantage of these developments. Previously unknown groups of the Mexican far left began receiving covert funds and training in 1991. The initial result of these activities was a rash of terrorist-type attacks against government and economic targets. After 1993, left wing political parties began to organize mass demonstrations among the urban poor of Mexico City and in rural areas. Ostensibly, these were non-political protests against unemployment, the high price of food, and the inequitable distribution of land. For their organizers, however, they were part of a general strategy aimed at demonstrating graphically the weakening hold of the government and its institutions on the general population.

A further result of the growing turmoil in Mexico was a swelling of the already sizable ranks of illegal aliens in the United States, even though the U.S. economy in the 1990s was in no position to accommodate these arrivals. While U.S. immigration law became somewhat stricter during this period, efforts to control illegal immigration remained

largely unsuccessful. This pattern led to rising "racial" tensions in major U.S. cities, as newly-arrived Mexican immigrants competed for jobs and social position with other underprivileged groups.

## Europe

Although no major political shifts took place in Western Europe between 1988 and 1992, relations between the U.S. and its European allies also took a turn for the worse during those years, due in large part to an increasing divergence of economic and political interests.

While these years were not bright ones for the U.S. economy, they were considerably worse for the Europeans. The drop in the relative value of the dollar brought the export-led growth which had been fueling Europe's strongest economies to an abrupt halt after 1986. In addition, such long-standing structural problems as insufficient investment, an overpriced and inappropriately trained labor force, and a continuing proclivity for ill-conceived government interventions into specific economic sectors ensured that European goods would remain uncompetitive in price and quality with those of the East Asian nations, and even of the United States; this pertained both to high technology products and to basic manufactured goods. A direct result of these conditions was to ensure continued high rates of unemployment throughout Europe. Moreover, although conservative governments remained in power in the major European countries throughout this period, they found it necessary to stimulate their economies artificially through government spending programs, leading to a return of higher inflation rates after 1990. This situations had a direct impact on European attitudes towards security decisions, and on U.S.-European relations.

While the U.S. remained committed to a strong anti-Soviet stance in the international arena, European governments increasingly looked first to their own short-term economic and social needs. In the general climate of economic stagnation and high unemployment which characterized the late 1980s and early 1990s, the continuation of the generous social welfare programs which European governments considered necessary to their political survival would have been incompatible with defense budget increases of the magnitude which U.S. planners considered necessary for the European NATO countries to meet their commitments to the alliance. Thus, while they remained committed to the alliance in theory, the major West European nations fell further and further behind on the force goals and modernization programs established in the early 1980s.

Faced with permanent budgetary problems and populations which found the possibility of war, or even of military threats, increasingly remote, the European governments placed a high premium on cooperation with the Soviet Union, and became increasingly willing to diverge from the United States in their efforts to build ties with the East. The primary instruments for the West Europeans were economic ones. The EEC sold large quantities of agricultural and high-technology products to the Soviet Union, while European financial establishments expanded the availability of credit to Eastern borrowers. One perceived benefit of this policy for the West Europeans was increased access to markets in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe for manufactured products which were largely uncompetitive with Asian and American goods in the open marketplace. On the whole, though, the actual economic benefits derived by the Europeans were marginal; the important gain from their point of view was a stable security environment in Europe. Aided by effective Soviet diplomacy and propaganda, which made much of "American unilateralism," including the lack of progress in arms control talks, this generalized "Ostpolitik" proved politically popular with European electorates.

The advantages for the U.S.S.R. of this arrangement were obvious. Increasingly, throughout the 1990s, Western Europe provided the Soviet economy with an implicit subsidy in the form of agricultural and industrial products at less than world market prices, as well as generous loans and financial assistance. This allowed the Soviets to maintain high levels of military spending despite the continued mediocre performance of their own domestic economy. It also helped to ensure relative calm in Eastern Europe, where the burgeoning availability of consumer goods helped to ease resentment of continuing Soviet political control.

In the United States, these developments were viewed with alarm. American analysts were quick to point out that the concessionary economic strategy of the European nations was working to increase the overall Soviet military threat, while the European's reluctance to shoulder the burden of needed NATO defense programs lessened the ability of the West to defend against Soviet aggression. In this environment, oft-repeated American threats to pull U.S. forces out of Europe, or at least to reduce their number sharply, were heard yet again. The institutional weight of the NATO commitment was such, however, that there remained little chance that the U.S. would actually make good on these threats in the absence of spectacular developments.

## **The Middle East**

Of more pointed interest to the great powers during this time were developments in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, where the years from 1988 to 2000 were characterized largely by Soviet advances. The first important step in this process was taken in very late 1980s when Iraq, which had reached a desperate juncture in its war with Iran following the loss of the city of Basra, requested and received direct Soviet military assistance. With the aid of a massive infusion of Soviet materiel and, more importantly, the transfer to Iraq of the equivalent of a full Soviet tactical air army, Iraq was able to regain the initiative and force Iran to withdraw from most of the territory its forces had taken in the previous years. After 1989, the Gulf war ground down to a low-level stalemate as both sides maintained extensive forces and fortifications along their common border, but neither attempted serious offensive actions.

The Soviet move into Iraq, however, proved to be permanent; Western analysts estimated that up to two divisions of Soviet ground forces, in addition to the air units, were present in Iraq after 1990. On the whole, moreover, the Soviet actions were well received by other Arab states, who regarded a total Iranian victory as the worst possible outcome. Even previously pro-Western states such as Kuwait, Oman, and Saudi Arabia sought to maintain their close relations with Iraq and, through Baghdad, to build closer ties with the U.S.S.R.

Among the leading Arab nations, only Syria had reason to be displeased. Not only had the government of Hafez-el-Assad supported Iran in the Gulf war, but it now saw its predominant position as the Soviets' chief ally in the Middle East taken over by long-time enemies in Baghdad. President Assad had other reasons to be concerned as well. Syria's occupation of Lebanon, once considered a strategic advantage, had proven to be a costly and thankless operation as rival Lebanese factions kept the country in a state of anarchy. Internally, Assad's government was coming under increasing pressure from religious and ethnic factions, although the President's unquestioned control of the armed forces left no doubt that he could remain in power indefinitely.

Syria's relative weakness was exploited by Israel to consolidate its hold on the Golan Heights and the West Bank, as well as the southern border zone of Lebanon. Minor clashes between Syrian and Israeli forces were frequent, but no serious conflict ensued. A succession of right-of-center governments in Jerusalem gradually abandoned even the appearance of seeking a negotiated settlement of the differences between Israel and either the Palestinians or neighboring Arab states, relying instead on military power and Israel's

close strategic relationship with the United States to ensure their country's security. The U.S.-Israeli relationship grew closer over the course of the decade, in fact, as the United States sought to compensate for Soviet gains elsewhere in the region by utilizing Israeli military facilities increasingly for its own purposes.

Of all of the Arab countries in the Middle East, none was as important to the United States as Egypt, where, in the early 1990s, long-standing economic and social problems approached crisis levels. Extremely poor economic conditions aggravated by rapid population growth created a huge indigent population, much of which was centered in Cairo. The failure of the established government to take effective steps to improve the living conditions and economic prospects of these people left them receptive to a variety of radical influences. Chief among them were Islamic fundamentalism, which attained great strength in all levels of society, and a revival of left-wing nationalism, which attracted many followers among intellectuals and, most particularly, in the military. President Mubarak sought to steer a course between these two extremes, but found it increasingly difficult to do so. His government's relations with the United States and Israel, in particular, were increasing liabilities, despite the large quantities of U.S. economic aid that they brought to Egypt.

## Africa

Trends visible in the 1980s continued in Africa throughout the following decade. Economic conditions fluctuated with climatic conditions and shifts in global markets, but in general remained poor. Each great power maintained close relations with its traditional allies. Of particular importance in this respect were U.S. military arrangements with Morocco, Kenya, and Somalia, which were considered critical to any military operations in the Middle East or Indian Ocean. The Soviets, for their part, maintained a major position in Ethiopia and, in the mid 1990s, began developing extensive naval facilities in Angola. Large numbers of Cuban forces remained on the ground in these two countries as well.

The Cuban presence was necessitated by the ongoing civil wars in Angola and Ethiopia which, while never threatening the existence of national governments or the control of core areas, constituted a constant drain on the African countries and their Soviet and Cuban allies. In the Republic of South Africa, the situation deteriorated gradually with the bulk of the country in a state of *de facto* insurgency for much of the 1990s. The Pretoria government maintained overwhelming military superiority over its adversaries, however, and the insurgents proved unable to carry out operations beyond terrorist-style

attacks or to control coherent stretches of territory. On South Africa's northern borders, Namibia, Botswana, and Mozambique drifted into near-total anarchy as weak and divided national governments and numerous Soviet- and South African-backed groups contended for power.

### East Asia

Soviet relations with the nations of East Asia followed a pattern not unlike those with Europe. Like their European counterparts, the principal nations of the Pacific Rim were not anxious to incur the expense of upgrading and modernizing their military capabilities, preferring to placate potential adversaries. In contrast with the Europeans, however, the economies of the Asian nations were dynamic and innovative throughout this period. World leaders in high technology, the nations of the Pacific Rim became centers for information management and advanced manufacturing. They remained highly dependent on outside sources for raw materials, however, especially energy products.

Relations between the United States and its two closest allies in the region, Japan and South Korea, underwent a difficult phase in this period. Economic problems, chiefly concerning trade issues, were the most obvious cause of friction. On a deeper level, however, leaders in both Tokyo and Seoul found it necessary for their own political standing to define positions which were more independent of Washington. Resurgent nationalist feelings, born of economic success, ensured that the two nations would be more assertive in the political, as well as the economic, arenas.

In the People's Republic of China, the successors of Deng Xiaoping continued on the cautious course of economic modernization launched in the mid-1980s, although their internal political policies proved to be much more conservative. While backing away from movement towards a tacit alliance with the United States, which some analysts had forecast in the mid 1980s, Beijing did not make significant progress towards improving relations with Moscow either. Instead, China sought to work with the other leading powers in East Asia to chart an independent course for the region.

Indeed, certain aspects of Chinese foreign policy brought it into conflict with both great powers. The question of Taiwan remained a serious point of contention between Beijing and Washington, exacerbated by the fact that conservative political candidates in the United States found it advantageous to make public pledges of U.S. support for the "stalwart anti-Communists" in Taipei. The official stance of the U.S. government was

considerably less belligerent, but it was nevertheless impossible for the U.S. to accede to Beijing's demands that Taiwan be "reunited" with the mainland.

China's clashes with the Soviet Union were of a more immediate nature. The focus of Sino-Soviet problems was in Southeast Asia, where the activities of the U.S.S.R.'s Vietnamese ally were of continuing concern to the Chinese. Despite claims made by Vietnam in the late 1980s to the effect that its forces would be withdrawn from Laos and Kampuchea, continuing armed resistance against pro-Vietnamese governments in those countries forced Hanoi to maintain large numbers of troops there into the 1990s. The Chinese, for their part, increased their support for rebel groups in the two countries, as well as maintaining a large military presence on the Sino-Vietnamese border where serious incidents occurred regularly. Far from seeking to restrain its ally, the U.S.S.R. openly supported Vietnamese policy in Laos and Kampuchea and continued to support the Vietnamese economy with a massive aid program. In return, the Soviets received extensive basing facilities in Vietnam, of which the most important was the naval base at Cam Ranh Bay.

In the early 1990s, however, China's strong anti-Soviet stance was echoed only by South Korea and Taiwan. The Southeast Asian nations and, most importantly, Japan chose instead to seek political accommodations with the Soviet Union which, they hoped, would ensure the stability of the region without the necessity of a greatly increased defense effort on their parts. In addition, Japan was attracted by the possibility of access to the mineral and energy resources of the Soviet Far East. By 1992, a substantial proportion of Japan's oil and natural gas came from this source.

#### **A DECADE OF TURMOIL--1993-2003**

The final decade of the twentieth century witnessed dramatic shifts in the international strategic environment. While the U.S. became embroiled in a civil war in Mexico, the NATO alliance was dissolved and the Soviet Union made great gains in the Middle East. At the same time, the nations of Northeast Asia, finally began to acquire military means on par with their economic power, leading to heightened tensions between them and the U.S.S.R.

#### **Unrest and Civil War in Mexico**

The crisis which ultimately led to the Mexican civil war began with the Presidential election held in that country in 1994. For the first time in living memory, the "official"

candidate of the PRI faced strong challengers from both the left and the right. When the returns showed that the PRI candidate had received over 70 percent of the vote, accusations of fraud were heard throughout Mexican society.

From then on, opposition forces in Mexico virtually ignored the official political process and concentrated on other tactics. For conservative forces in the north, this was merely an extension of the sorts of parallel economic and political processes which had been developing previously. Left-wing forces in the southern two-thirds of the country, however, chose a drastically different path.

From 1995 onwards, the Mexican "moderate" left concentrated on mass mobilization and organization. Radical factions stepped up terrorist attacks against government and economic targets significantly, no longer confining those attacks to Mexico itself. Mexican consulates and the assets of major international corporations active in Mexico were attacked throughout the world, but most especially in the United States, where Mexican extremists found it easy to blend in with the large population of Mexican immigrants in major cities. Particularly hard hit targets were the branches of Mexico's leading private creditors--Chase Manhattan, Bank of America, and Manufacturer's Hanover.

This wave of violence heightened the already severe tensions between Mexicans in the United States and other elements of the U.S. urban population. "Racially" motivated murders and riots became increasingly common in California and the southwestern states, as well as in major east coast cities. In response, security precautions by local governments were increased throughout the country, but particularly in the Southwest and in California. The Federal Government also became involved.

After 1992, efforts to stem illegal immigration from Mexico were strengthened considerably; for the first time, these steps included overt military measures. Units of the Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California National Guards were placed under federal control and used to patrol the U.S.-Mexican border. In an even greater break with precedent, regular military forces were deployed to the border area, including Army helicopter units, which were employed to ferry National Guard troops as well as to patrol the border, and Air Force and Air National Guard tactical squadrons, which began carrying out reconnaissance flights over northern Mexico. In addition, maritime patrols by Coast Guard and U.S. Navy forces in the Gulf of Mexico and along the U.S. West Coast were



greatly expanded. The sizable basing and logistical facilities needed to support these activities were constructed in the years 1992-1996.

All of these measures were costly both for the already-strained federal budget and, in the case of Guard units, for local governments and communities as well. When added to the growing resentment generated by Mexican terrorist activities in the United States, this resulted in increasing political pressure to take direct action to "do something" about the situation in Mexico. What exactly might be done, however, was far from clear. The Mexican government, for its part, was considerably less than helpful.

In a desperate effort to maintain itself in power, the Mexican government attempted to placate its leftist critics. The new President of Mexico made sharp attacks on U.S. policy in Central America and threatened wholesale nationalization to punish tax evasion by U.S.-owned businesses in Mexico. Unfortunately for the PRI, the overwhelming majority of the Mexican population had long since ceased paying serious attention to the government's official pronouncements. The radical left, for its part, was firmly under the control of its Cuban and Soviet sponsors and had no intention of halting its program of destabilization. Ironically, the principal result of the Mexican government's deliberate efforts to exploit anti-American feelings was to antagonize U.S. conservatives who, until then, had been inclined to tolerate the government as the only available alternative to the left.

In 1997, the social unrest which had long been brewing in Mexico exploded into open civil war. In May of that year, incontrovertible evidence of massive vote fraud by the government in key state elections was uncovered, giving renewed credence to widespread claims that the presidential election of 1994 had also been rigged. This proved to be the event for which the various parties of the far left had been waiting. In the following weeks, a series of riots rocked Mexico City. Efforts by police and military units to contain the rioters led to violence and, eventually, several hundred deaths. Leftist forces responded with a call for revolution. Large caches of weapons, smuggled into the country over the past years, were revealed, and their contents distributed to demonstrators. In the ensuing clash, sheer weight of numbers carried the day; on May 10, 1997, the Presidential Palace was stormed and a number of high government officials, including the President, were killed. The next day, the "Revolutionary Socialist Republic of Mexico" (RSRM) was proclaimed by a group of political formations dominated by elements of the far left. In the week that followed, much of southern and central Mexico rallied to the new regime, which was recognized immediately by Cuba and Nicaragua.

The northern states of Mexico, however, as well as the armed forces, refused to have anything to do with the RSRM. The army had abandoned its militarily untenable positions in the capital and other major cities of southern Mexico, but it maintained its positions in the north, as well as strong-points in rural areas and a foothold in Vera Cruz. The northern states, for their part, were thrown into considerable confusion. The population and local leaders of northern Mexico had little sympathy for the notoriously corrupt and ineffective government which had been overthrown. On the other hand, the Marxist rhetoric coming from the RSRM in Mexico City was anathema to the free-market north. As a result, the north was a natural haven for the armed forces, retreating before the popular insurrection in the south, as well as for a number of civilian refugees who fled the violence in the south. On June 1st, a hastily convened meeting of military commanders and northern political leaders concluded that the only option was to carry out a military struggle to free the remainder of the country from what they considered to be a foreign-engineered, Communist take-over. As a result of this meeting, the "Provisional Government of National Salvation" (GPSN) was formed, headed by an executive council of three military and three civilian leaders.

Following the June 1st declaration, the RSRM, claiming with considerable justification that the "new revolution" was under imminent attack, sent out an urgent call for military assistance from all friendly nations. The response was swift; Cuban volunteers arrived in large numbers, followed by less publicized advisors from a number of East European countries. Of equal importance, a number of Soviet allies began providing the RSRM with sophisticated military equipment, particularly antiaircraft and antiarmor weapons which would be needed to defend against the superior military potential of the Mexican armed forces. Given the numerical inferiority of the anti-Communist forces in Mexico, however, it soon became apparent that the revolutionary government would not be toppled easily. With Cuban assistance, the RSRM launched attacks on the armed forces' positions in southern and central Mexico. The so-called People's Army still lacked the firepower to take heavily defended positions, such as military bases, but it succeeded in isolating them from each other and from the outside world. Only in the north did the armed forces retain freedom of movement.

The United States, naturally enough, was appalled at this turn of events in Mexico, and left no doubt as to its hostility to the revolutionary regime in Mexico City. From the outset, however, some U.S. leaders realized that the crisis might in fact constitute an opportunity for the U.S. to solve the problems which the deteriorating condition of Mexico

had caused for over a decade. Accordingly, the emergence of the GPSN was welcomed in Washington as an improvement, not only over the RSRM but over the recently overthrown "legitimate" government. Economic and humanitarian assistance was rushed into northern Mexico within days of the proclamation of the GPSN to aid refugee populations and--at least in theory--for use in the impoverished south. When foreign military assistance began flowing to the revolutionary government in June and July, the United States moved toward military involvement in the conflict. The leaders of the GPSN were only too eager to accept U.S. assistance, realizing full well that without outside help their position would be hopeless in the long term.

On July 2nd, the United States officially recognized the GPSN as the legitimate government of Mexico and announced an emergency program of economic and military assistance. Even before that date, U.S. military supplies were being air-lifted to Mexican armed forces units in the northern portion of the country and transported by sea to the beleaguered garrison of Vera Cruz. The U.S. also announced that it would not tolerate the delivery of weapons to what it referred to as "insurgent forces" in Mexico, let alone the introduction of foreign military forces into the country. The U.S. naval presence in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea was increased, although no immediate steps were taken to challenge Cuban or East European ships bound for Mexico.

By the autumn of 1997, the situation in Mexico had reached temporary equilibrium. The territory north of a line running roughly from Tampico on the Gulf coast to Matzatlan on the Pacific, was under the control of the GPSN and the Mexican armed forces. Virtually all of the remainder of the country was held by the RSRM with the support of its Cuban and East European allies. Most isolated military positions in the south had surrendered or, in some cases, been allowed to retreat northward; the GPSN garrison of Vera Cruz remained an exceptional strong-point. Neither Mexican "government" was in a position to defeat the other outright: The RSRM lacked the military equipment to attack the Mexican armed forces in open combat, while the latter were too small in number to contemplate the reconquest of a hostile south. This stand-off might have continued for some time had not the foreign allies of the two sides stepped up their respective involvements. The United States had no intention of tolerating anarchic conditions in Mexico and, in the winter of 1997-98, large numbers of U.S. advisors were sent to northern Mexico to assist the GPSN. In addition, the U.S. tactical air units that had patrolled the Mexican border earlier in the decade from bases in the southwestern United States were reinforced and began carrying out armed reconnaissance flights over the country as far south as Mexico City.

The U.S. also continued to deliver military equipment to its Mexican ally, including front line tactical aircraft, and--with armed naval convoys--carried out a major reinforcement of the garrison at Vera Cruz.

In the spring of 1998, the GPSN went on the offensive, employing its U.S.-supplied equipment to drive southward along both the Gulf and Pacific coasts. U.S. tactical air units were heavily involved in these operations, providing close air support for GPSN units and disrupting RSRM logistics and communications with air strikes deep into Communist-controlled territory. A Marine Amphibious Brigade also participated in an advance north from Vera Cruz.

At the same time, the United States announced that it would begin enforcing a total "quarantine" of military equipment to the RSRM. Two aircraft carrier task forces in the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico and one off Mexico's Pacific coast gave weight to this statement. This move led to direct conflict between U.S. units and Cuban--and perhaps Soviet--forces for first time, as U.S. challenges to Cuban ships led to clashes between U.S. and Cuban aircraft--some of which were reputedly flown by Soviet pilots--as well as between U.S. naval units and Cuban patrol boats and submarines. The overwhelming U.S. superiority in naval and air assets ensured the success of this campaign with very few U.S. casualties. By the summer of 1998, Cuba and the Soviet Union had largely abandoned attempts to challenge the U.S. blockade openly, falling back on attempts to supply forces in Mexico surreptitiously by land through Guatemala and in small boats. Significantly, the Soviet Union did nothing to challenge American military moves directly, such as moving attack submarines to threaten U.S. naval forces in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific or deploying tactical air units to Cuba; leaders in the Kremlin presumably concluded that the geo-strategic imbalance in the Caribbean could not be redressed.

Increasingly isolated from the outside, the ultimate fate of the RSRM as a "sovereign" government was not in doubt. U.S.-backed forces recaptured Guadalajara in July 1998. Mexico City itself was taken in November, although not without fierce fighting, and in the winter of 1998-99, the RSRM lost its hold on the remaining urban centers of Mexico. Rather than surrender, however, many of its fighters retired to the rugged mountains of central Mexico and to the jungles near the Guatemalan border and in the Yucatan peninsula, where they continued fierce guerrilla resistance. In this they were quite effective; the U.S.-backed government was engaged in continuous combat with insurgent forces for much of the following two years. Not until well into the year 2001 was all of Mexico more or less pacified.

The Mexican civil war did not result in a permanent Soviet gain in the Western Hemisphere, as some had originally feared. Still, there can be no doubt that, by monopolizing U.S. attention for the better part of four years, it left the U.S.S.R. a much freer hand in the rest of the world than it otherwise would have had. The Mexican conflict also contributed to a serious deterioration in U.S. relations with its European allies.

### **Demise of NATO**

The difficult economic circumstances of the early 1990s eventually took their toll on European governments. In 1996, the fragile Conservative/Social Democrat coalition government which had been attempting to govern the United Kingdom fell. In the general elections that summer, the Labour party won an absolute majority of seats in Parliament. While Labour's economic agenda, for the most part, was comprised of moderate programs to encourage public-sector led growth, the foreign and security policies of the new government were firmly dominated by the left wing of the party. Foremost on its list of demands was the denuclearization of Great Britain; in 1996, the new British government took unilateral steps to decommission its own nuclear forces and opened negotiations with the United States for the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons and nuclear-capable forces from the United Kingdom. Since the latter category included the bulk of U.S. air assets in Britain, the demands of the Labour government were interpreted in Washington as leading, if accepted, to the inevitable pull-out of all U.S. forces from Britain. On the heels of this development, moreover, the governments of Belgium, Holland and Italy were encouraged to begin hinting publicly of similar demands on their own part, likely to come in the near future. A significant sector of public and congressional opinion in the United States reacted by pronouncing itself in favor of abandoning NATO entirely. Certain U.S. defense officials leaked well-publicized "anonymous" statements to the effect that the NATO alliance had outlived its usefulness, in any event, and that the European allies could not be depended on in case of war.

The U.S. government resisted these pressures for a time and sought to enter into negotiations with the various European countries concerning the future of nuclear weapons in the alliance. In January 1997, however, the Soviet Union sought to capitalize on NATO's difficulties by offering to remove all of its nuclear weapons, including bombs and artillery as well as intermediate- and short-range nuclear missiles, from Europe in exchange for a similar move by NATO. This proposed "denuclearization" was a far cry from the much more limited proposals dealing only with intermediate-range missiles that had been

put forward by both sides in earlier years. Significantly, the Soviets did not include French nuclear systems in their proposal, thus avoiding providing an easy reason for NATO to turn down the proposal.

The Soviet offer was aimed particularly at West Germany, where the political situation was known to be unstable. Tension between the ruling Christian Democratic Party and its smaller coalition partner, the Free Democratic Party, had been building for some time, as the FDP sought to counter the rise of right wing elements within the CDU. The Soviet offer, as planners in Moscow no doubt intended, brought the West German crisis to a head. The German Chancellor publicly rejected the offer, but FDP leaders, claiming they had not been consulted, responded by withdrawing their support from the government. The parliamentary vote of no confidence which followed resulted in the fall of the CDU and its replacement by a coalition of the Free Democratic and the Social Democratic Parties--a mirror image of what happened to the SPD's Helmut Schmidt in 1982. The new Chancellor, a Social Democrat, gave his support to the Soviet offer, and proposed that a summit of NATO's European members be held to agree on a common negotiating position vis-a-vis both the Soviets and the Americans.

The outcome of this summit, held in Bonn in May 1997, was considered by the Americans as little short of an ultimatum. All U.S. nuclear systems were to be removed from Europe within the next three years, subject only to a simultaneous Soviet withdrawal of nuclear forces east of the Ural mountains. Little heed was paid to U.S. concerns that Soviet mobile missiles and tactical weapons could easily be returned to Europe on short notice and that, in any case, Soviet compliance with such an agreement could not be verified. The "denuclearization" of Europe had captured the political imagination of West European populations; governments had little choice but to go along.

In the end, the United States was forced to agree to European demands on nuclear issues. The ultimate consequence, however, was the final triumph of those in the United States who had long advocated the withdrawal of U.S. forces in Europe, if not the outright abandonment of NATO. The consensus among U.S. military leaders was that, without the option of employing nuclear weapons, U.S. forces in Europe would be unacceptably vulnerable to Soviet attack. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in a secret report to the president, recommended that U.S. conventional forces be withdrawn from Europe at the same time as nuclear forces. The outbreak of the Mexican civil war, which focused U.S. attention on the Western Hemisphere at the expense of Europe in any event, also favored supporters of this viewpoint. The final blow came when the governments of Italy, Great

Britain, and West Germany extended official recognition to the Mexican revolutionary government.

In his "State of the Union" Speech in January 1998, the President announced that the demands of the Europeans that U.S. nuclear weapons be removed from Europe, as well as the refusal of European governments to take needed steps to strengthen their own defenses, made it impossible to guarantee the security of U.S. forces stationed in Europe. Accordingly, all U.S. conventional, as well as nuclear, forces would be withdrawn from Europe, with the pull-out to be completed by 2001. The President asserted at this time that the U.S. would retain close "moral and historical" links with Europe, but the actual status of NATO was left unclear. One point was made explicitly; the integrated command structure would be dismantled within a year.

The Soviet government heralded this move as a great victory for peace. On a more practical level, Kremlin leaders moved to exploit the new-found freedom-of-action which would result from the dramatic lessening of the military potential of Western Europe. Within a few months of the President's speech, the U.S.S.R. began preparing to shift military forces no longer needed in Europe to central Asia and the Far East. The growing economic power of the states of Northeast Asia, in particular, worried Soviet analysts; if these states turned their resources to the military sector, the balance of power in East Asia could shift rapidly in a direction unfavorable to the U.S.S.R. By 1995, Soviet forces in Asia had surpassed those in Europe in both number and quality.

### **Soviet Gains in the Middle East**

While the United States concentrated its attention on problems in Europe and Mexico, the U.S.S.R. was reaping the benefits of its earlier moves in the Middle East. In a number of key countries, pro-Western governments were overthrown by leftist forces.

A spectacular episode was the assassination of King Hussein of Jordan in 1995 by a pro-Syrian, Palestinian faction. In the brief struggle which followed, Palestinians and other left-wing forces overwhelmed those elements of the Jordanian armed forces which remained loyal to the Hashemite regime, although a number of units and individuals, including the prospective heir to the throne, succeeded in making their way to Saudi Arabia where they vowed to continue the struggle to free their homeland.

Of far greater long-term importance was the shift in orientation of the Egyptian government after 1995. In June of that year, President Mubarak had been deposed by

leftist military colleagues. These men, claiming to be the spiritual and political heirs of Gamal Abdel Nasser, vowed to move their country out of its "dependent" relationship with the United States and to regain the leadership of the Arab world, which legitimately was Egypt's.

The new Egyptian government was well aware that the greatest threat to its survival was not posed by the pro-Western forces which it had just overthrown, but rather by the Islamic right wing. Accordingly, military leaders in Cairo took steps regarding both domestic and foreign issues to placate Islamic extremists, hoping to consolidate their own position in the short term. An obvious measure in this campaign was repudiation of the 20-year-old peace treaty with Israel, an action which was duly proclaimed within a week of the coup. This repudiation was chiefly symbolic, however, since Egypt's new rulers understood full well that the country was in no position to launch a war. In further concessions, a number of well-known fundamentalists were released from prison, and the military government promised to "study" the possibility of eventually reinstating full traditional Islamic law to Egypt.

In practice, Egypt's new rulers planned to move towards a close military relationship with the Soviet Union, believing that such an alliance would bring more tangible military benefits than continued association with the United States, whose intimate commitment to Israel made it a highly unreliable and politically costly ally in their eyes. In return for extensive Soviet military assistance, Egypt's new rulers concluded a series of agreements with the U.S.S.R. granting that country air and naval facilities and basing rights. By the first years of the 21st century, Alexandria had become a major Soviet naval base, and the home port of an expanded Soviet Mediterranean Squadron.

These events in Cairo had political consequences throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Probably the country least affected, however, was Israel. Leaders in Jerusalem had long regarded the peace treaty with Egypt as effectively worthless and, on balance, considered it advantageous that Egypt would no longer receive U.S. political and military support, thus leaving Israel a freer hand in any crisis. The only change in Jerusalem's posture in the years that followed the Egyptian coup was that Israeli officials began alluding openly to Israel's long-suspected but never acknowledged nuclear capabilities. The implication was clear; any attack on the Jewish state would invite catastrophic retaliation.



More drastic was the impact on Egypt's North African neighbors. Soviet pressure resulted in a rapprochement between Egypt and Libya--ruled by a leftist military government since the 1994 death of Colonel Qadafi. In the Sudan, leftist military elements followed the example of their Egyptian colleagues and overthrew a conservative Islamic government in Khartoum. The Sudan's new rulers, however, proved no more successful at putting down the endemic insurgency in the southern portions of the country than their predecessors had been. In addition, they were faced, after 1998, with armed opposition from various fundamentalist groups based in remote northern and western areas of the Sudan.

The final link in the chain of Soviet allies in the Middle East was forged between 1999 and 2001 with the gradual rapprochement between Syria and the other pro-Soviet states of the region. The military government which took power in Damascus following the death of President Hafez el Assad found it easy to forge close ties with the like-minded regime in Cairo and, with the aid of Soviet and Egyptian intermediaries, was reconciled with Syria's longstanding Iraqi rivals. The new order in the Middle East was demonstrated to the world in spectacular fashion in March 2001, when Iraqi, Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian units held joint military exercises in the desert near the Saudi-Jordanian border. Less spectacular, but of equal long-term significance was the fact that the Soviet Union--with naval facilities in Egypt and Syria, and tactical aircraft based in those two countries and in Libya--had become the dominant naval power in the eastern Mediterranean. When the U.S. lost access to Italian and Spanish bases after 1999 (Greek bases had been lost a decade earlier), the relative strength of the Soviet fleet in the western Mediterranean increased considerably as well.

Two key Mid-Eastern states, Iran and Saudi Arabia, remained outside the Soviet orbit. The first of these was virtually powerless through this period, torn by factional strife. In Tehran, clerical factions struggled with each other for power, while fighting both leftist and nationalist forces and, in peripheral regions, Kurdish, Baluchi, and ethnic Arab groups--among others--seeking to gain autonomy. In the late 1990s, this situation resulted in the effective fragmentation of Iran, as competing factions held sway in the major cities while separatist forces effectively eliminated central authority in outlying regions. The Soviet Union, naturally enough, sought to exploit this situation by supporting a variety of diverse groups. Some of these, such as Kurdish separatists and the Iranian Mujaheddin, were openly leftist and pro-Soviet; many more accepted Soviet financial assistance--sometimes unknowingly--in order to carry out their particular objectives. In general,

Soviet policy was aimed not at achieving control of Iran--a task considered impossible in the near-term--but rather at prolonging chaotic conditions within the country for as long as possible.

Despite Soviet interference, however, one of the contending Shi'ite parties had emerged victorious in Tehran by the year 2000 and was beginning to impose its will on the rest of the country. Competing clerical factions and the fragmented Iranian leftist movement were brought under control fairly rapidly. Observers agreed, however, that the reassertion of central control over the peripheral regions of Iran would be a lengthy process. The northwest of the country, inhabited by Kurdish and Azeri populations, presented an especially difficult problem. Not only was separatist sentiment solidly entrenched in local populations, but the proximity of this area to the Soviet Union allowed much greater Soviet assistance to anti-government forces than had been possible elsewhere.

Of far greater immediate interest was the Arabian peninsula. In Saudi Arabia, staunchly conservative governments held sway. Leftist agitation was not a serious problem in this region, with the exception of Kuwait, but pressure from both Sunni and Shi'ite fundamentalist forces had caused the Saudi royal family to pursue an extremely guarded policy throughout the 1990s. In order to maintain their position as leaders of the Arab World, the Saudis found it necessary to do away with virtually all visible ties between themselves and the United States--still the "Great Satan" in the rhetoric of Islamic extremists. The same was true for the smaller states of the Arabian Peninsula. Even Oman, which had previously been the key link in U.S. security planning for the region, was forced to withdraw from the basing agreements which had been concluded in connection with the development of the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force.

Despite these precautions, all of the Gulf states found themselves vulnerable to attack from Shi'ite extremist groups. These were especially severe in the smaller states, where Shi'ites constituted a sizable proportion of the population or even--in Qatar--a majority. Terrorist attacks against oil installations continued throughout the 1990s, reaching a peak near the end of the decade. In the most spectacular incident, a coup attempted in October 1998 in Qatar by Shi'ites supported by one of the factions in Iran was defeated only by the intervention of Saudi troops--and then only after several days of intense fighting.

Despite these problems, the position of the Saudi government actually improved somewhat as the decade wore on. As leftist forces made progress in Egypt and other

nations in the region, even the most radical Sunni fundamentalists came to realize that the conservative Saudi monarchy was the best hope for Arab resistance to the spread of Communism, and began to support it more actively.

Problems with Shi'ite groups decreased sharply after the year 2000. At that time, the new government in Tehran, realizing that the Soviet Union was chiefly responsible for the continuing turmoil in their country, began seeking accommodations with other Islamic states and, in particular, with Saudi Arabia, in an effort to put forward a more unified front against the Soviets and their regional allies. As a first step towards such a reconciliation, the Tehran regime cut off support to Shi'ite extremists in the Gulf and made it known that it would not support any further agitation against "genuinely Islamic" governments. The decline of the Shi'ite threat made it possible for the Saudis and their neighbors to adopt a harder line towards the pro-Soviet states to the north. Attempts to seek better relations with the U.S.S.R. itself were shelved permanently. Instead, in the first years of the 21st century, Saudi financial assistance began to flow to anti-government Islamic groups in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq.

### **Rearmament in East Asia**

Over the decade from 1993 to 2003, the principal nations of East Asia moved from a policy of political cooperation with the Soviet Union to one of open hostility. In part, this was due to the actions of the Soviet Union itself. The increasing Soviet hegemony in the Middle East was of considerable concern to Asian states, as they remained dependent on oil from the Gulf for much of their energy needs. Continued Soviet support for the aggressive policies of Vietnam was a more important sore point. Finally, the military build-up in the Soviet Far East reached ominous proportions after 1999.

In addition to these factors, the shift in policy on the part of East Asian states, and in particular by Japan, was a natural product of the political evolution underway since the 1980s. By the mid-1990s, well before the peak of the Soviet military build-up in Siberia, the popular desire to assert greater national independence--which had already been apparent in Japan's earlier decision to distance itself from the United States--finally overcame the long-standing reluctance of the Tokyo government to increase its defense spending significantly.

This shift was particularly welcome in Seoul and Beijing, where the Soviet threat was viewed most seriously. Following lengthy negotiations among the three governments in 1995 and 1996, the three states formed what amounted to a military alliance--a

development which would have been considered wildly implausible only a few years earlier. The practical results of this move were twofold. Japan took a number of unilateral steps to increase its military potential, concentrating on naval and air power. In addition, technological cooperation programs were established between Japan, on the one hand, and China and South Korea, on the other.

The impact of this new cooperation on Chinese military capabilities was particularly significant. Japanese technology and financial assistance enabled China to modernize its armed forces at a rate far more rapid than could otherwise have been achieved. Chinese air power--including air defense capabilities--benefited particularly, as did China's strategic nuclear force, which was modernized by the addition of advanced ground- and air-launched cruise missiles.

A development which did not involve the Soviets directly, but which increased Beijing's freedom-of-action considerably, was the conclusion of an agreement-in-principle with Taiwan in 1998. This breakthrough was made possible in large part because of a generational shift in Taiwan. The island's new rulers, unburdened with grudges dating back to the Chinese civil war, were willing to adopt a more flexible position. Leaders in Beijing, for their part, were anxious to find a solution to a problem which had been a thorn in China's side since the creation of the People's Republic. The agreement reached in 1996 was carefully drafted to protect the sensibilities of both sides. No final decisions on questions of sovereignty were announced. Instead Beijing and Taipei pledged to follow a course of "growing association," starting with economic cooperation, and renewed social contacts, and moving towards the coordination of foreign policies. The eventual integration of Taiwan into the mainland's political framework was left as an ultimate objective, to be achieved at some unspecified time in the future.

Although it did not fulfill Beijing's long-stated goal of "reintegrating" Taiwan into the People's Republic, this agreement brought significant short-term benefits to both sides. Most obviously, it eliminated a diplomatic difficulty which had long complicated the foreign relations of both states. Moreover, economic cooperation between Taiwan and the mainland proved extremely fruitful as Taiwan found a greatly expanded market for its manufactured exports, while China gained access to another source of much-needed technology.

## **THE OUTBREAK OF WAR--2004-2005**

In 2004 and 2005, the confrontational trends that had been building in East Asia and the Middle East erupted into open conflict when the Soviet Union attempted to extend its hegemony over the entire Persian Gulf region, a move which in turn triggered war in Northeast Asia.

### **Rising Tension in Northeast Asia**

The movement towards greater military preparedness which had been evident in China, Japan, and South Korea in the first years of the 21st century intensified after 2003. In addition, the United States, freed from the burden of the Mexican civil war, became a more active participant in Pacific security affairs. While relations between the U.S. and the leading Asian states had gone through a difficult period in the 1990s, no crisis comparable to that between the U.S. and the states of Western Europe had ever been reached. In particular, the American military presence in South Korea and Japan, while scaled down, had remained in place. Accordingly, it proved relatively easy to forge new and closer ties when the altered strategic environment of the new century required them.

The initiative came from the Asian states themselves. Despite the increasing military and industrial mobilization which was underway in China, Japan, and South Korea, it was obvious to the leaders of these countries that their forces would not be capable of matching the vastly expanded military potential of Soviet forces in the Far East for many years to come. Cooperation with the United States, however, could equalize the balance of power much more quickly. After the China-Taiwan agreement of 1998 had removed the last important political barrier between the United States and China, leaders in Washington were in a position to move quickly to take advantage of the opportunities presented by conditions in Northeast Asia.

In an initial step, the U.S. naval presence in the Western Pacific was increased substantially. By late 1994, a minimum of four carrier task forces were deployed to this area, which also became a primary focus of U.S. submarine activity. The decreased demand for U.S. naval forces in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific following the end of hostilities in Mexico made it easier to sustain these shifts in U.S. military dispositions. In support of these American moves, Japanese and Korean port facilities were made available to the U.S. on a greatly expanded basis.

In 2004, relations between the U.S. and the Northeast Asian countries had evolved to the point that more permanent and visible deployments of U.S. forces could begin. Agreements were reached with Japan and South Korea for the transfer of up to four additional wings of tactical aircraft to the two countries in the following three years and for an increase in the number of U.S. ground forces in South Korea to two full divisions by the end of 2005, with the addition of a new Marine Corp division and air wing. U.S. decision-makers saw advantages to these deployments, not only to bolster the East Asian allies, but also as forward staging for possible contingencies in the Persian Gulf region. U.S. Air Force assets in the Philippines were also built up. While no U.S. forces were positioned in China, secret agreements for the stationing of U.S. air units there in case of war were reached between Washington and Beijing and appropriate facilities were prepared.

The U.S.S.R. responded to these moves by increasing the pace of its own build-up in the Far East. As it became increasingly clear that the military balance in Europe had stabilized to the Soviet's advantage, military forces and equipment were transferred to Asia. Reversing historical patterns, the newest and most sophisticated Soviet military equipment was now sent to forces in Asia, rather than Europe. Rail and other communication links between eastern Siberia and European Russia also were upgraded. This last development, in fact, was part of a larger effort to exploit the resources of the Soviet Far East--a project in which West European capital and technology was heavily involved.

By 2004, thus, an overt arms race was underway in Northeast Asia. From the point of view of the Soviet Union, the prospects for prevailing in this contest were not good in the long term. The Soviet economy, even with tacit assistance from Western Europe, was in no position to compete with the economies of the Pacific Rim. Eventually, the U.S.S.R.'s head start in military potential would be erased. Demographic comparisons between the Soviet and Chinese populations, moreover, ensured that the U.S.S.R. would be at a permanent numerical disadvantage in manpower. For this reason, one faction in the Kremlin supported immediate action in East Asia to take advantage of the U.S.S.R.'s wasting assets. In present circumstances, these leaders asserted, a massive but brief strike could deal a crippling blow to Chinese and South Korean military potential, leaving Japan no choice but to reach an accommodation with the Soviet Union. Two considerations prevented this policy from being put into action, however.

The presence of the upgraded Chinese nuclear force was a major factor in Soviet decision-making. Leaders in Moscow feared that even after a preemptive strike, a

sufficient number of China's mobile ballistic and cruise missiles would survive to inflict significant damage on Soviet military and economic targets. The Chinese government, moreover, was considered likely to employ these weapons if it found itself facing a major military defeat. A second consideration was the role of the United States. While the Soviets had been able to take advantage of U.S. preoccupations in Europe and Mexico during the previous decade in order to advance their position in the Middle East, Soviet leaders recognized that the Far Eastern situation was different, particularly as the U.S. increased its military capabilities in the region. On balance, Soviet leaders concluded that a more indirect approach would best serve their purposes; they soon found a venue to advance their interests as critical events transpired in the Middle East.

### **Conflict in the Middle East**

Throughout the political upheavals which had rocked the Middle East in the 1990s, the underlying economic and social problems remained. The bulk of the region's population was, if anything, poorer in 2003 than it had been a decade earlier. In Egypt and Jordan, the loss of American aid had compounded the problem. At the same time, destabilizing social factors, of which the continued influence of fundamentalist Islam was the most important, also remained. The concessions which the left-wing governments of Egypt and Syria had made to fundamentalist forces purchased tranquility only for a brief period. By the summer of 2004, agitation against the Cairo and Damascus regimes, along with other pro-Soviet governments, was as great as it had ever been against their pro-American predecessors.

Compounding the problem was the role played by Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Saudis, having reached an apparently stable arrangement with fundamentalist forces in their own country, launched a two-pronged offensive intended to destabilize left-wing Arab governments and ultimately to drive them and their Soviet sponsors out of power. The Saudi arrangement with fundamentalist leaders (both Sunni and Shi'ite) incorporated a pledge of continued tranquility within the Arabian Peninsula in exchange for Saudi support of fundamentalist opposition forces in Soviet-dominated Muslim nations. The Saudis thus stepped up financial and material support for fundamentalist and other opposition groups in pro-Soviet Arab states. Egypt and Jordan, considered to be the most vulnerable, received the bulk of Saudi attention, but efforts were also made in Iraq and Syria, and even in Afghanistan.

Ties with non-Arab Islamic states which opposed the Soviet Union, such as Turkey and Pakistan, were also kept up with great care. In both of these countries, Saudi economic assistance was particularly welcome. Pakistan, for its part, continued its long-standing policy of stationing units of its armed forces in Saudi Arabia, contributing significantly to Saudi security from both internal and external dangers.

In the second prong of the Saudi offensive, and in a more radical departure from recent behavior, Saudi Arabia and the smaller states of the Arabian peninsula also began very cautiously to seek a rapprochement with the United States. That the Saudis were able to do this at all was a remarkable measure of the extent to which their domestic situation had been brought under control and energies freed to focus on the struggle with the Soviet Union. Although visible military ties were still considered impossible, secret agreements between the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Oman were reached in September 2004 on questions of renewed U.S. access to logistical facilities in the two countries in "emergency" situations.

The government of Iran was a second major thorn in the Soviets' side. Against all expectations, the Tehran government was making considerable progress in its struggle to bring the various centrifugal elements in the country under its control. Not only was it clear, by 2004, that nothing short of massive Soviet intervention would succeed in detaching Kurdish, Azeri, or any other ethnic territories from Iran, but the Tehran regime had resumed the longstanding Iranian policy of supporting Shi'ite opposition groups in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon--in sharp contrast to its tacit agreement with the Saudis to halt Shi'ite agitation in the Gulf.

In the autumn of 2004, planners in Moscow--not to mention Baghdad and Cairo--had concluded that Soviet gains of the 1990s in the Middle East were in danger of disappearing, if immediate steps were not taken to preserve them. In an initial effort to secure existing positions, Soviet ground forces were moved into Jordan and Syria for the first time, bolstering the large Soviet civilian and advisory presence in these countries and adding to the Soviet military strength already present in Iraq and Egypt.

In a more aggressive move, which could be interpreted either as a final warning or a test of strength, leftist forces staged a successful coup in Kuwait on December 2, 2004, which was followed within 24 hours by the occupation of that much-coveted country by uninvited Iraqi "peace-keeping" forces. Although a powerful underground among the



long-established Palestinian community in Kuwait played a part in these developments, the role of Soviet and Iraqi agents was transparent--perhaps intentionally so.

If this move was intended to force the Saudis to give up their support of fundamentalist groups, however, it failed entirely. Indeed, the effect was very much the opposite. The loss of Kuwait, the preservation of which had cost the Saudis so much trouble and expense in previous years, finally pushed the Saudis into a renewed military alliance with the United States. On December 20th, a formal public agreement was concluded between the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Oman. By the terms of this pact, the U.S. regained full access to military facilities developed in the 1980s for the Rapid Deployment Force, including the right to pre-position military equipment. In addition, U.S. military assistance to local armed forces was increased substantially. Moreover, in a secret annex to the treaty, the United States committed itself to equip and maintain at least one Army and one Marine division for the specific purpose of rapid deployment to the Arabian Peninsula in case of Soviet attack on the region.

These developments did not go unnoticed in Moscow. Following the U.S.-Saudi agreement, Soviet planners concluded that the situation in the Middle East had reached a crisis point. In order to maintain existing Soviet positions, they believed, it would be necessary to neutralize the remaining centers of opposition in Iran and the Arabian peninsula. Moreover, the newly-renewed U.S. commitment to the defense of the Gulf meant that a Soviet victory in this region would strike a direct and severe blow to the credibility of all U.S. military guarantees.

In addition, extending Soviet hegemony over the entire Middle East was considered to be a potentially promising way of dealing with the increasingly dangerous situation in East Asia. The economies of the Pacific Rim, despite major efforts to diversify their energy sources, still depended on Middle Eastern oil for a significant share of their total consumption--all the more since they had halted their purchases of Soviet oil and gas in the late 1990s while other sources of oil available to the East Asian powers such as Alaska and the North Sea had largely been exhausted by the end of the 20th century. If the Soviet Union managed to bring the entirety of the petroleum resources of the Middle East under its control or at least put itself in a position to cut off the flow of oil at will, Kremlin leaders concluded, it would be in a much stronger position with regard to Japan and its allies, at least in the near term, and yet would not run the risk of a direct military confrontation with them.

In light of the difficulties encountered by pro-Soviet governments elsewhere in the Middle East, Soviet strategists realized that the probability of establishing stable Soviet allies in Iran and Saudi Arabia was not high. A more likely scenario following the defeat of pro-American governments would be a prolonged period of anarchy as various ethnic, political, and religious factions fought among themselves. Kremlin planners concluded, however, that even this outcome would be more favorable to the Soviet Union than the status quo in the Middle East.

U.S. influence in the Middle East, Moscow concluded, depended on the existence of stable pro-American governments. The U.S.S.R., on the other hand, had developed a strong network of alliances among left wing political and ethnic factions throughout the region. Moreover, the relative proximity of the U.S.S.R. and the presence of reliable Soviet allies in Libya, South Yemen, and Afghanistan ensured that Soviet naval and tactical air forces would dominate the region. The only significant remaining hostile power from the Soviet point of view--the State of Israel--could, Moscow believed, be contained by a combination of careful diplomacy and the threat of Soviet nuclear retaliation.

By January 2005, thus, Moscow was committed to a major offensive in the Middle East. Throughout the first months of the year, U.S. and Israeli intelligence agencies detected large movements of Iraqi and Syrian troops into Jordan and Kuwait, as well as massive efforts to upgrade the Egyptian air force. Additional Soviet forces were also detected moving into Iraq and Syria. Tehran's increasing control of northwestern Iran made Soviet overflights of that region increasingly hazardous, so large quantities of Soviet troops and supplies continued to move to Syria by sea. Soviet forces in the Transcaucasian military district of the U.S.S.R. also were reinforced, in preparation for a push into Iran when the time came.

Although the Soviets hoped to move before the United States had time to deploy an effective presence in the Middle East, precautionary steps were taken to hinder possible U.S. actions. Important among these were attempts to destabilize key peripheral countries that could be used by the United States as logistical bases for actions in the Gulf and transfer points for material en route from North America. To this end, the U.S.S.R. took actions, both open and covert, to encourage clashes between Ethiopia and Somalia and between Algeria and Morocco. In addition, support for local leftist forces in Kenya, Oman, and Pakistan was stepped up considerably. The result of all these actions was a climate of increasing instability throughout the Middle East and North Africa, in which the security of U.S. facilities, should they be put into operation, could be difficult to maintain.

A final strategic move by the Soviet Union was to increase its naval presence in the South Atlantic. The completion of extensive port facilities in Angola made it possible to base Soviet submarines in the South Atlantic on a permanent basis, eliminating the lengthy transit time to the Kola Peninsula. Given the effective Soviet control of the eastern Mediterranean and the Vietnam-based Soviet naval presence in Southeast Asian waters, this move made it increasingly difficult for the United States to control the sea lanes linking it to the Middle East.

### **The Soviet Offensive**

By October 2005, the Soviets and their Middle Eastern allies were ready. Their plan was to move first against the Arabian Peninsula, counting on the speed and weight of the attack to capture key points in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States before the United States could mount an effective counter-intervention. Quick success was considered essential, as a long campaign in the Arabian Peninsula would present extreme logistical difficulties. Iran, the other major target of the Soviet offensive, presented the reverse case. That country's difficult topography and large population made it difficult to occupy with a single massive attack, but its proximity to the Soviet Union made it possible to envisage a successful protracted campaign. Moreover, if Saudi Arabia were eliminated from the picture, Iran would be isolated and considerably less dangerous.

Soviet and allied forces struck on October 20, 2005, moving from Iraq and Kuwait towards the key oil-producing regions of northeastern Saudi Arabia, while Egyptian air and sea-borne forces struck Jiddah and other points on the Saudi west coast. At the same time, Soviet airborne forces captured Bahrain and Qatar, and air strikes were launched against military facilities in Oman. The latter country was also attacked by South Yemeni forces.

One country conspicuously absent from the fighting was Israel. Soviet and allied forces were careful to avoid violating Israeli airspace and territory in an obvious effort to avoid drawing the Jewish state into the conflict against them. At the same time, however, the Soviet Union made it clear that, should Israel initiate military action, Soviet retaliation would be direct and overwhelming--a barely veiled nuclear threat. Nevertheless, the very existence of Israel ensured that a substantial portion of the Egyptian armed forces and the great majority of Syrian forces were unavailable for operations in the Arabian peninsula.

As expected, the initial Soviet attack enjoyed considerable success. Despite considerable warning, Saudi armed forces were unable to overcome the numerical superiority of Soviet and Iraqi forces. The Saudis did inflict extensive losses on the

attackers, with U.S.-supplied anti-aircraft systems proving particularly effective. Still, the key oil port of Ras Tannurah fell in the first week of fighting. Saudi and Omani forces had better success in the south and West. Oman easily repulsed attacks from South Yemen, while Egyptian gains on the Red Sea coast were limited to isolated beachheads.

Despite this surprisingly stiff resistance from local forces, there can be little doubt that the Soviet offensive would have succeeded had the United States not reacted more quickly than had been thought possible. Aircraft from three U.S. carriers in the Arabian Sea were in action over Oman and the Gulf on the second day of hostilities, while two additional carriers stationed in the Western Pacific headed towards the area. U.S. naval air power stiffened Saudi and Omani defenses, slowing the Soviet advance and buying time for the more important transfers of U.S. forces envisaged in the secret agreements of 2004, which were initiated immediately. Critically, U.S. carrier-based air power and naval air-defense assets were largely successful in defending American logistical facilities and pre-positioned equipment in Oman from Soviet air attack in the first days of fighting.

Within 24 hours of the Soviet attack, the President of the United States, in a globally broadcast speech, announced that U.S. troops would be sent to the Middle East "in whatever number and for whatever time necessary" to turn back Soviet aggression. A week after the initial Soviet attack, two full division-equivalents of U.S. troops had been airlifted to Oman, where they took possession of pre-positioned equipment and prepared for action. Tactical aircraft were also being moved into the area at a rapid rate. Three wings were expected to be operational within the week.

While these initial moves ensured that the Soviet offensive would not succeed in its initial objective of occupying all of the Arabian peninsula, the Soviets and their allies showed no signs of withdrawing. Instead, they consolidated the positions captured in the initial days of fighting and pushed southwards towards the United Arab Emirates and inland in the direction of Riyadh. U.S. strategists concluded that only a major U.S. military effort would have a chance of reversing the Soviet advance. Moreover, merely defeating the Soviet offensive into Arabia would accomplish little if Soviet control of Iraq and Jordan were not challenged as well. Some American observers foresaw the need for operations in Iran and Egypt as well, eventually.

To accomplish any of these objectives, the deployment of additional U.S. forces, including several armored divisions, would be required. This, in turn, required more secure control of the sea lanes of communication between the continental U.S. and the

Middle East. Accordingly, when the President made the decision to commit U.S. forces to combat in Arabia, he issued a secret order to all U.S. naval forces to engage Soviet and allied navies throughout the world.

### War Spreads to East Asia

A key aspect of U.S. naval doctrine was to carry the attack directly to the enemy's home ports as quickly as possible. When this "forward strategy" had first been proposed, in the late 1980s, most attention had been focused on the Arctic naval bases of European Russia. In 2005, however, equal emphasis was placed in both Soviet and U.S. planning on the Asian facilities of the U.S.S.R. The states of Northeast Asia, horrified by the implication for their own independence and security of Soviet domination of the Middle East, proved willing to cooperate with the United States. China had begun to mobilize its forces with the first signs of the Soviet offensive in the Middle East. With the U.S. naval campaign, East Asian forces came directly into play. Japanese air and naval forces joined the U.S. Seventh Fleet to establish a blockade of the Japanese and East China Seas, as well as the Sea of Okhotsk. U.S. submarines, moreover, sought to close the main Soviet facility at Petropavlosk, on the Pacific. U.S. forces also attacked Soviet units on the open seas, as well as at Vietnamese bases. These forces clashed with Soviet forces from the outset and inflicted substantial casualties on the Soviet fleet. Soviet ships on the high seas proved highly vulnerable to U.S. sea- and air-launched missiles, and even the Soviet submarine fleet suffered significant losses. This victory was not without price, however; by October 23 the U.S. had lost numerous aircraft and minor naval combatants. More serious was the crippling of the carrier *Abraham Lincoln* by Soviet air-launched cruise missiles. Significantly, neither side employed nuclear weapons at sea in the first days of fighting, reinforcing the precedent being set on land.

The Soviet Union, realizing full well the potential danger of such activities, issued an ultimatum to Japan: resume a neutral stance or face immediate attack. After only a few days of intense consultation with their Asian allies and the United States, the Japanese produced a spectacular response. In the pre-dawn hours of October 30, Japanese and U.S. aircraft struck the Soviet naval base at Vladivostok. Hours later, Chinese troops launched offensives from Manchuria towards Vladivostok and the key rail and road junction of Khabarovsk some three hundred miles to the north. Simultaneously, South Korean, and U.S. troops attacked North Korea. With these actions, the Soviet Union found itself

facing a full fledged war in Northeast Asia--precisely the situation it had tried to avoid by moving in the Middle East.

### **THE DISPOSITION OF FORCES IN OCTOBER 2005**

By the end of October 2005, U.S. ground and air forces were in combat in Korea and the Arabian peninsula, with approximately two division-equivalents deployed in each region. Further transfers of ground and air forces to the Middle East and Northeast Asia--including Manchuria--were being readied.

U.S. naval forces were engaged in combat with Soviet submarines and long-range aircraft throughout the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. In addition, the four carrier battle groups in the Western Pacific and the five in the Arabian Sea were subject to attack by land-based missiles and aircraft. When it became clear that the U.S. would be involved in a major global conflict, long-standing contingency plans for attacks against Soviet facilities in Cuba, Vietnam, and Angola were also put into effect. As U.S. land-based air power was brought to bear in Northeast Asia and the Middle East, carrier assets would be transferred to the operations against Soviet bases elsewhere, including the Caribbean.

A major uncertainty for U.S. military planning was the role which eventually would be played by Pakistan and Turkey. If these countries stood by previous agreements and allowed the U.S. to make use of facilities on their territory, the U.S. position in the Middle East would be greatly enhanced. In light of the relative success of anti-Soviet forces in the first days of fighting, U.S. leaders were hopeful that these key regional states would prove cooperative. The possibility also existed that the U.S.S.R. would attempt to foreclose such an option by launching preemptive attacks on these two countries. The disposition of Soviet troops in Afghanistan and the Soviet Transcaucasian district led U.S. analysts to conclude that the U.S.S.R. was prepared for such contingencies.

Israel presented a special case. It possessed significant military potential of its own which, if brought to bear, would be expected to make short work of Egypt and Syria. Given that the U.S. was committed to an alliance with key Arab governments and that these, in turn, had gained domestic support by means of a strong anti-Israeli stance, active cooperation between the U.S. and Israel could be expected to lead to serious difficulties. Accordingly, the American government discreetly encouraged Jerusalem to maintain its non-belligerent attitude, at least for the moment, while at the same time engaging in vigorous diplomacy with its Arab allies to convince them of the value of a "tactical" alliance with Israel. Success in this latter effort, however, was not expected in the short term.

The Soviets, for their part, had committed major ground and air assets to both the Middle East and East Asia. Western analysts estimated that the thrust into Saudi Arabia had been made by up to four armored and two airborne divisions, and that a force of equivalent size was held in reserve in Iraq. Additional Soviet troops were present in Jordan and Egypt. Soviet forces in the Far East were clearly much larger, but their state of readiness was uncertain.

At the end of the first week of fighting, thus, great power forces faced each other in three distinct theaters. In the Middle East, both sides had committed elite rapid-deployment units along with considerable naval and tactical air forces. Logistics and supply were problems for both powers, but especially severe for the United States in light of the great distances involved and the limited nature of prior American preparations in the area of hostilities. In East Asia, the fighting was between numerous and well established forces as the Soviet Union and China, as well as both Koreas, increasingly committed their central forces to the conflict. U.S. and Japanese air power would be critical in this region. Finally, U.S. and Soviet naval forces were engaged in a conflict for control of vital sea lanes of communication which could be expected to spread to all of the world's oceans as the conflict on land intensified. Intimately linked to this naval conflict were attempts by each power to attack the principal naval bases of the other, including those on Soviet and American territory.

## **XI. CONCLUSIONS**

The seven global scenarios presented in this study illustrate differing patterns of escalation as well as a variety of alternative future political environments. In the initial section of this chapter we examine and compare these patterns with a view to exploring their implications for long term strategic planning. In a final section, we summarize the key questions for military planners which could be explored in each scenario.

### **PATTERNS OF ESCALATION**

One of the clearest conclusions emerging from this study is that a major U.S./Soviet conflict would almost certainly not erupt suddenly from "normal" international circumstances. Given the enormous potential stakes of any direct U.S./Soviet conflict, leaders of both powers have long adopted a fundamentally risk-adverse strategy in dealing with each other. This patterns of international behavior developed and reinforced over the now nearly half a century during which an intense ideological and strategic competition between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. has not led to direct military conflict will not be altered overnight. Any major war between the great powers would be plausible only after the decision-making environment in each capital had evolved in such a way that military options were not only acceptable, but actually preferable to other alternatives. Such a profound change in the perception of U.S. and Soviet decision makers would be likely to occur only over a period of years, and only after repeated international incidents of truly major import.

In long-term political perspective, this is the process of escalation. The analysis presented in Chapter III provides a theoretical model of how it might take place; the seven scenarios suggest a variety of concrete examples, different ways in which the United States and the Soviet Union could move from their traditionally peaceful competition to open warfare.



## Escalatory Incidents

In each of the seven scenarios, it is possible to identify a number of key events which propelled the international situation away from the conditions we have come to regard as normal, and towards one in which war between the great powers was possible. These events are not limited to those involving the great powers themselves. The actions of third countries play a key role in the development of all seven scenarios. They create the environment in which the great powers act and bring about many of the crises to which they must respond. This is most pronounced in Scenarios Gamma and Delta, in which the actions of third countries bring about great power conflict directly, but in all the scenarios third country political developments and ongoing regional conflicts play a critical role.

Even after taking into account third country initiatives, however, the central consideration in any analysis of the prospects of war between the United States and the Soviet Union must always remain the evolution of decision-making within those two countries. In Scenarios Epsilon and Zeta, internal political considerations are indeed the single most important factor in the creation of situations which finally lead to conflict. In all of the scenarios, the decision-making environment in both great powers is transformed by events, both internal and external, into one in which the decision to go to war is made.

An illustration of the importance of political decision-making in the great powers is the fact that similar international events play very different roles in various scenarios, depending on the overall atmosphere of great power relations. War between Israel and Syria, to cite one frequently employed example, serves as the trigger to general war in Scenario Beta, leads only to U.S. and Soviet troop deployments in Scenario Alpha, and brings about a Soviet nuclear strike against Israel in Scenario Epsilon. A similar pattern exists for Indo/Pakistani or Sino/Vietnamese conflicts, as well as for great power initiatives in Central America or South Asia. In all these cases, the response made by U.S. and Soviet leaders to the opportunities or challenges provided by international developments depends largely on political considerations and, in particular, on the degree to which the decision-making environment has already been influenced by previous crises and confrontations.

If these scenarios are used in political planning and simulation exercises, the "escalatory incidents" are especially useful as points of focus. Since they represent important decisions or turning points, they can be analyzed with an eye to determining how such a crisis might be avoided or defused in the real world. In this context, the "solution"

postulated in the scenarios--all of which, by definition, lead directly or indirectly to war--might well be considered less than optimal.

The pattern of escalation in each of the seven scenarios is summarized in Tables 5 through 11, which list key escalatory events in the context of building a great power confrontation. The first datum specified in the table for each event, "Type of Event," distinguishes between those events in which the great powers are directly involved--whether as a principal actor or in support of an ally--and those which involve mainly third countries. The latter are significant either when they lead directly to subsequent events in which the great powers do participate or when they influence perceptions of the policy options by the leaders of the great powers. Those events that do involve the great powers directly are classified according to the typology presented in Chapter I, which places each given event in the context of an escalating great power confrontation.

Regardless of whether a given event is centered on the great powers or on other countries, its greatest significance for our purposes lies in its impact on the broader evolution of international events. The datum, "Immediate Conclusion," given for each event, specifies the short-term consequences of the event itself. For those events which involve the use of military forces, it is given in terms of the criteria suggested in the original description of regional flashpoints in the Introduction to this study. The last two data for each event examine its longer range consequences. "Linkages to Subsequent Crises" are direct military or political connections between conflicts in one region and subsequent conflicts in another. "Impact on Great Power Decision-Making" represents more indirect effects of individual crises, suggesting how involvement in each conflict may have moved decision makers in one or both powers closer to acceptance of general war.

**Table 5. Key Escalatory Events in Scenario Alpha**

1. **Event:** U.S. supports insurgents in Nicaragua, Angola, and Afghanistan.  
**Type of Event:** Targets of opportunity--Vulnerable Soviet allies.  
**Immediate Outcome:** U.S. clashes with Soviet allies.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** U.S. activities in Central America lead to the growth of leftist insurgencies in the region.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Soviets conclude that they must move to meet threat to allies, Central America seems to offer the best opportunity for doing this.
2. **Event:** Increased Soviet military presence in Nicaragua.  
**Type of Event:** Retaliation/Diversion--Soviets seek to protect one endangered ally and prevent the U.S. from exploiting opportunities to attack others.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Isolated U.S./Soviet incidents--Soviet retreat.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.

- Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Soviet leaders seek new opportunities to reverse foreign policy set-backs.
3. **Event:** Soviet backing of Syrian attack.  
**Type of Event:** Dangerous local conflict encouraged by U.S.S.R.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Isolated U.S./Soviet incidents--Permanent deployment of U.S. and Soviet forces in the Middle East.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Military and political problems associated with Soviet military presence in Syria lead to involvement in Turkey and Iraq.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** As great power presence in the Mid-East becomes permanent, decisions are taken in consequence of tactical, rather than strategic, considerations.
  4. **Event:** Turkish and Iraqi governments deny Soviets rights of transit through their territorial air and sea lanes.  
**Type of Event:** Third country action.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Greatly complicates Soviet logistical problems in Syria.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Encourages Soviet intervention in Kurdish insurgency as means to put pressure on the recalcitrant governments.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Search for alternate routes to Syria becomes a major problem for the U.S.S.R., leading to initiatives which would not otherwise have been attempted--NATO support of Turkish action strengthens general U.S. position greatly.
  5. **Event:** Soviet support of Kurdish uprisings in Iraq and Turkey.  
**Type of Event:** Initially a tactical move to ensure free passage through northern Iraq, then a retaliatory and diversionary move against Turkey.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Soviet clashes with Turkey--Ensures that the Turkish government will take a strong anti-Soviet stance, particularly that Soviet rights of transit through Turkey will be denied permanently.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Failure of this attempt forces the U.S.S.R. to pursue riskier initiatives in search of alternate routes to Syria.
  6. **Event:** Air and naval incidents in the Mediterranean.  
**Type of Event:** Friction between military units in proximate deployments.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Isolated incidents.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Encourages Soviet intervention in Yugoslavia in search of alternate route to the Middle East--First direct clashes between U.S. and Soviet forces contribute to eroding the sanction against direct conflict, making subsequent conflicts more likely.
  7. **Event:** Soviet intervention in Yugoslavia.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--power vacuum.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Major conflict in region.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Major troop movements of both powers and their allies heighten the risk of incidents outside Yugoslavia.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Extensive combat between Soviet and NATO forces removes any remaining sanction against the use of force.
  8. **Event:** NATO and Warsaw Pact mobilization on the Central Front.  
**Type of Event:** Preemptive moves by both powers to defend key allies.

**Immediate Outcome:** Misperceptions of each others intentions leads both powers to escalate their military preparations beyond the level required by Yugoslav crisis, which in turn leads to Soviet offensive in response to the precautionary mobilization of NATO nuclear systems.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** N/A

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** N/A.

**Table 6. Key Escalatory Events In Scenario Beta**

1. **Event:** Soviet intervention in the Gulf War.  
**Type of Event:** Dangerous local conflict.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Deployment of Soviet Forces to Iraq.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Increased Soviet influence in the Gulf facilitates interventions in Iran.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Lack of effective U.S. response suggests that other Soviet initiatives might be possible.
2. **Event:** Soviet pressure on Pakistan.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--Vulnerable U.S. ally.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Clashes between Soviet and Pakistani forces--U.S. ally, Pakistan, destabilized.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Soviet position in Afghanistan improved and Soviet influence in Iran increased further.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S. inaction confirms its reluctance to commit forces abroad, encouraging the U.S.S.R. to pursue riskier initiatives.
3. **Event:** Political disintegration of Iran.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--power vacuum.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Deployment of U.S. and Soviet troops--Isolated incidents.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** The great powers' military presence in Iran draws them into other regional conflicts (Oman, Baluchistan) which they might have avoided otherwise, as well as helping to precipitate those conflicts.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S. action represents a commitment to a more active role, but the lack of viable local allies in Iran places heavy demands on U.S. forces in order to maintain their positions and leads to a lessening of U.S. ability to intervene elsewhere.
4. **Event:** Soviets support Baluchi insurgency.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--Vulnerable U.S. ally.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Further great power military deployments --Isolated incidents.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Decisive shift in U.S. attitudes towards a more confrontational stance.
5. **Event:** North Korean attack on South Korea.  
**Type of Event:** Dangerous local conflict.  
**Immediate Outcome:** U.S. forces committed to major regional conflict-- Limited use of nuclear weapons against a Soviet ally.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages outside Korea.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** New commitments further diminish U.S. freedom of-action, while the use of nuclear weapons removes the sanction on nuclear use.
6. **Event:** Syrian attack on Israel.

**Type of Event:** Dangerous local conflict.

**Immediate Outcome:** New U.S. deployment.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Pushed beyond its military capacity to intervene effectively, the U.S. is forced to seek to liquidate the outstanding conflict in Korea.

7. **Event:** U.S. nuclear strike inside North Korea.

**Type of Event:** Great power escalation of a local conflict.

**Immediate Outcome:** Escalation of regional conflict.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** U.S. naval forces near Korea provide targets for Soviet retaliation.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Soviet leaders convinced that U.S. is pursuing a recklessly aggressive policy and that retaliation is necessary.

8. **Event:** Soviet attack on U.S. carrier.

**Type of Event:** Retaliation.

**Immediate Outcome:** Regional conflict in Korea escalated to direct great power confrontation.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S. leaders choose to risk further escalation rather than appearing to back down.

9. **Event:** Nuclear attacks on U.S. and Soviet territory.

**Type of Event:** Retaliation.

**Immediate Outcome:** Confirms escalatory trend--both great powers committed to war.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** N/A

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** N/A.

#### **Table 7. Key Escalatory Events In Scenario Gamma**

1. **Event:** U.S.-backed forces win control of Nicaragua.

**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--Vulnerable Soviet ally.

**Immediate Outcome:** Surrogate forces only involved--No great power clashes or deployments.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S.S.R. forced to reconsider the cost of supporting Third World allies--Lack of support from U.S. allies encourages more unilateralist view by American leaders.

2. **Event:** U.S.S.R. consolidates its position in Afghanistan and increases its influence in Iran.

**Type of Event:** Great power initiative to consolidate its sphere of influence.

**Immediate Outcome:** Soviet freedom-of-action in region greatly improved.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Improves Soviet position for action against Pakistan.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Demonstrates to Soviet and U.S. leaders that the U.S.S.R. retains considerable influence in its proximate geo-strategic area.

3. **Event:** Soviet pressure on Pakistan.

**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--Vulnerable U.S. ally

**Immediate Outcome:** Greater-than-expected U.S. reaction--Isolated U.S./Soviet clashes

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages outside the region

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Demonstrates the flexibility of U.S. military power and the fact that both great powers are willing to risk confrontation--illustrates and strengthens the shift in U.S. attention away from Europe.

4. **Event:** Soviet rapprochement with Yugoslavia.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--political move to exploit a growing power vacuum.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Gradual deployment of Soviet forces to Yugoslavia.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** French and British governments perceive threat to the balance of power in Europe and begin to take steps to reverse prior deterioration in military strength and readiness in anticipation of possible conflict in Europe.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Shift in French and British attitudes makes the eventual reassumption by the U.S. of a role in European security possible.
5. **Event:** Soviet forces suppress Polish uprising.  
**Type of Event:** Soviet support of a vulnerable ally.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Soviet position restored.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Increased anti-Soviet sentiment in Europe leads France and Britain to support anti-Soviet forces in Yugoslavia.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Soviet leaders conclude that excessive Western influence was at the root of the Polish troubles, and that similar troubles can be prevented elsewhere, particularly in the DDR, by moving to cut off contacts between East and West European countries.
6. **Event:** U.S. and Chinese pressure on Vietnam and Afghanistan.  
**Type of Event:** Retaliation--Vulnerable Soviet allies.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Isolated clashes between great power forces.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** As previously secure Soviet positions in Asia are threatened, Soviet leaders become convinced that U.S. opportunism will be a serious threat if Soviet forces become involved in a European conflict.
7. **Event:** U.S.S.R. imposes new leadership on East Germany.  
**Type of Event:** Preemptive political action in defense of a perceived vulnerable ally.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Deteriorating security situation in the DDR leads to increased Soviet force levels there.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Contributes to the radicalization of East German policy and increases the resolve of other West European governments.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S. leaders are convinced that the USSR must accept a renewed commitment to European security.
8. **Event:** Radical right-wing government in Germany.  
**Type of Event:** Third country political development.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Germany pulls out of NATO and acts aggressively.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** New West German government moves to increase German border and generally increase tension between East and West Germany.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Soviet leaders perceive a significant danger to their control over East Germany and to their position in Europe.
9. **Event:** Soviets invade F.R.G. and seize control of West Germany.  
**Type of Event:** Preemptive Soviet attack.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Major military confrontation.

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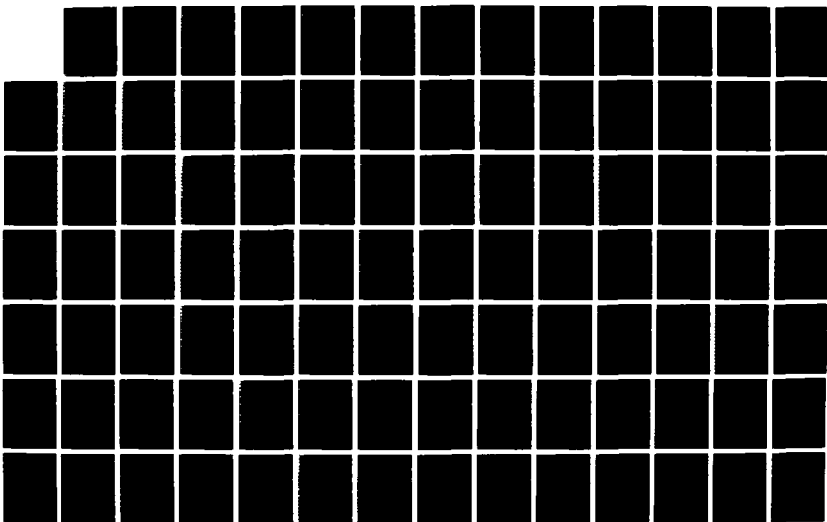
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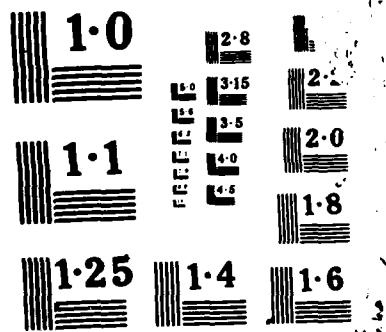
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**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Attacks against American units lead U.S. to retaliate against Soviet territory with nuclear weapons.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Both powers committed to global war.

**Table 8. Key Escalatory Events In Scenario Delta**

1. **Event:** Success of U.S.-backed forces in Nicaragua.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--Vulnerable Soviet ally.  
**Immediate Outcome:** U.S. position in Central America consolidated--Threat of U.S. blockade.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Success encourages further U.S. activism while the U.S.S.R. is convinced of the necessity of offering greater resistance in the future.
2. **Event:** U.S./Chinese initiative in Kampuchea.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--Vulnerable Soviet ally.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Indirect U.S. pressure against Soviet ally leads to Soviet threat against U.S. which forces U.S. retreat.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Chinese leaders, disenchanted with the U.S., move towards long-term rapprochement with the Soviet Union and feel free to pursue aggressive policies towards Taiwan.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Political changes following policy failure move the U.S. towards more isolationist behavior.
3. **Event:** Soviets back Kurdish and Baluchi rebels.  
**Type of Event:** Targets of opportunity--Power vacuums in Iran and Pakistan.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Creation of new Soviet ally.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Improved Soviet position in Southwest Asia contributes to subsequent success in Baluchistan, but antagonizes key regional powers.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Continuing lack of U.S. response convinces Soviets that further opportunities can be exploited.
4. **Event:** Radical nationalist government in Japan.  
**Type of Event:** Third country political development.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Japan breaks security ties with the U.S. and moves to a neutral position.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Leads to a significant deterioration in South Korea's security, making that country an attractive target for Sino/Soviet attack.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** China and the U.S.S.R. perceive renewed opportunities to make progress against remaining pro-U.S. states in the Far East--U.S. eventually strengthens ties with remaining Far Eastern allies.
5. **Event:** Soviet-backed creation of Baluchi state.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--Power vacuum in Pakistan  
**Immediate Outcome:** Soviet effort to consolidate regional gains before the U.S. can react is initially successful.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Confirms fears of anti-Soviet regional powers, but eventually leads to a more active U.S. presence in the region.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Renewal of Soviet aggression convinces U.S. leaders that direct U.S. involvement in Southwest Asia is required.
6. **Event:** Chinese pressure on Taiwan and the Philippines.

**Type of Event:** Diversion--Soviets encourage an existing local conflict in an effort to focus U.S. attention away from Southwest Asia.

**Immediate Outcome:** Deployment of U.S. forces to Taiwan --U.S./China air clashes.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Sino-American conflict in the Far East develops its own momentum.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** The U.S. stands by its Far Eastern allies, but does not slow its growing involvement in Southwest Asia.

7. **Event:** U.S. and Soviet forces deployed in Southwest Asia.

**Type of Event:** Both powers seek to support vulnerable allies--U.S. sees opportunity to reverse prior Soviet gains.

**Immediate Outcome:** Increased regional tension.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** The presence of the great powers' troops in Turkey and Kurdistan greatly increases the probability that regional conflicts in Southwest Asia will be drawn into the growing global confrontation between the powers.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S.S.R. concludes that more powerful diversionary tactics are needed to prevent defeat in Southwest Asia and turn to Korea for this purpose--U.S. troop commitments in Southwest Asia reduce capacity for conventional intervention in the Far East, contributing to the subsequent U.S. decision to employ nuclear weapons in Korea.

8. **Event:** North Korean and Chinese attack against South Korea.

**Type of Event:** Soviet-backed diversion (exploitation of an existing local conflict).

**Immediate Outcome:** Major regional conflict--U.S. nuclear strikes on North Korea and China cause extensive Korean, Chinese, and Soviet casualties--Soviets retaliate with nuclear weapons against South Korea.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Both great powers and China committed to war in the Far East.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Despite commitments in the Far East, the U.S. refuses to be diverted from what it sees as more important initiatives in Southwest Asia.

9. **Event:** U.S. and Soviet air strikes in Southwest Asia.

**Type of Event:** Escalation of regional conflict and retaliation.

**Immediate Outcome:** Major regional conflict, as U.S. and Soviet ground forces enter into action--Air strikes against Turkish and Soviet territory lead to broadening of the conflict area.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Both powers committed to war in Southwest Asia, as well as the Far East.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** N/A.

#### Table 9. Key Escalatory Events in Scenario Epsilon

1. **Event:** U.S./South Korean split.

**Type of Event:** Political development in a third country.

**Immediate Outcome:** U.S. troops withdrawn from Korea.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Weakens U.S. position in the Far East--first step in the advent of a Far Eastern coalition not aligned with the U.S.

2. **Event:** U.S.-backed forces seize control of Managua; Sandinistas return to guerilla conflict.

**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--Vulnerable Soviet ally.

**Immediate Outcome:** Success by U.S. surrogates leads to destabilization of other U.S. allies.

**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No linkages outside region.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Lack of lasting benefit from this "victory" discourages U.S. leaders from pursuing similar possibilities elsewhere.

3. **Event:** Soviet intervention in Israeli/Syrian war.  
**Type of Event:** Dangerous local conflict.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Israeli nuclear strikes against Syria lead to Soviet nuclear strikes against Israel—U.S. refuses to intervene to aid Israel.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** The inability of the U.S. to act decisively in the face of a Soviet nuclear threat strengthens the political position of U.S. leaders who advocate the deployment of strategic defenses.
4. **Event:** Isolationist government in the U.S. launches crash S.D.I deployment program.  
**Type of Event:** Political development in a great power.  
**Immediate Outcome:** U.S. troops withdrawn from Europe and the Far East.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Accelerates development of independent power centers in Europe and the Far East.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Emphasis on strategic offensive and defensive forces leads to a significant erosion of U.S. conventional capabilities, largely limiting options for future intervention—Deployment of U.S. strategic forces leads Soviets to conclude that U.S. offensive strike might be more likely in future crises.
5. **Event:** Development of independent security communities in Western Europe and East Asia.  
**Type of Event:** Political developments in third countries.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Effective neutralization of Europe.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Building conflict between the U.S.S.R. and China/Japan for influence in the Far East.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Unable to benefit fully from the U.S. withdrawal, the Soviets focus increasingly on China as their principal antagonist.
6. **Event:** U.S. intervention in South Africa.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity—Power vacuum.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Clashes between U.S. forces and Soviet allies dwindle to ongoing low-level conflict.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Marks the return of the U.S. to an activist policy and leads to Soviet concerns about other possible U.S. initiatives.
7. **Event:** U.S. intervention in Thai/Vietnamese conflict.  
**Type of Event:** Dangerous local conflict.  
**Immediate Outcome:** U.S./Soviet air clashes.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Soviets put pressure on South Korea in an attempt to undermine Korean and Japanese support for the aggressive Sino-American policy.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Demonstrates the potential for cooperation between China and the U.S., a possibility which disturbs the Soviets considerably.
8. **Event:** U.S. troops to South Korea.  
**Type of Event:** Preemptive deployment to show support for a vulnerable ally (chiefly symbolic).  
**Immediate Outcome:** South Korea and Japan agree to support China and the U.S. in a hard line against the U.S.S.R.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Represents the realistic limit of U.S. conventional capabilities—Any additional U.S. intervention can only take place at the strategic nuclear level.

**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Convinces the U.S.S.R. that North Korea, and by implication the entire Soviet position in the Far East, is in imminent danger of collapsing, and that only the neutralization of China can reverse this.

9. **Event:** Soviets attack China and U.S. space-based SDI systems.  
**Type of Event:** Preemptive attack.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Major regional conflict.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** N/A  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S. leaders must weigh strategic nuclear options without the security of strategic defenses.

**Table 10. Key Escalatory Events in Scenario Zeta**

1. **Event:** Indo/Pakistani confrontation.  
**Type of Event:** Political conflict between third countries.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Increased regional tension.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Pakistan accelerates development of nuclear weapons and increases support for Afghan Mujaheddin.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S. able to forge closer ties with Pakistan.
2. **Event:** Soviet intervention in Poland.  
**Type of Event:** Preemptive support of a vulnerable ally.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Soviet domination of Poland restored after considerable bloodshed.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Building tensions in Eastern Europe encourage the rise of strong anti-Soviet governments in Western Europe.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Progressive Soviet leaders weakened politically, while hard-line forces gain power in the U.S.--U.S. initiates a long-term military and industrial mobilization.
3. **Event:** Fall of Sandinista government.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--vulnerable Soviet ally.  
**Immediate Outcome:** U.S. position in Central America stabilized.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Repercussions of Nicaraguan defeat are instrumental in destabilizing Cuban government.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Builds U.S. confidence in its ability to bring about constructive change in Latin America.
4. **Event:** Fall of Cuban Communist government.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--Vulnerable Soviet ally.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Major defeat for the U.S.S.R. as Cuba is reintegrated into the West.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkage.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Major recriminations within the Soviet government lead to rise of hard-line leaders favoring repressive policy in Eastern Europe.
5. **Event:** Mujaheddin raids into U.S.S.R.  
**Type of Event:** Initiative by local forces.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Isolated clashes between Soviet and Mujaheddin forces.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Soviet retaliation leads to the neutralization of Pakistan.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Soviet planning focuses on South Asia as most urgent problem area.

6. **Event:** Soviets provoke Indo/Pakistani War.  
**Type of Event:** Local conflict directly provoked by a great power.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Pakistan totally defeated in a conflict which involves the use of nuclear weapons by both sides --Soviets defeat the Afghan Mujaheddin.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** No direct linkages.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Soviet leaders seek to repeat tactics successful in South Asia in Eastern Europe, despite different circumstances.
  
7. **Event:** Soviet martial law in Eastern Europe.  
**Type of Event:** Preemptive action in support of vulnerable allies.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Large increase in Soviet troop strength in Eastern Europe. Refugee situations lead to border incidents between Soviet and NATO forces.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Crack-down only intensifies dissidence in East Germany and Poland.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S. and NATO forces put on war footing-- Growing failure of East European policy destabilizes Soviet government.
  
8. **Event:** Coup in the Soviet Union.  
**Type of Event:** Political event in a great power.  
**Immediate Outcome:** New Soviet leaders launch nuclear strikes against U.S. and NATO forces in Western Europe--U.S. and NATO respond with strikes against Eastern Europe and Soviet naval bases.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** N/A  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S. leaders must weigh potential gains in Europe against the risk of an unstable Soviet government launching a strategic nuclear strike.

#### **Table 11. Key Escalatory Events In Scenario Omega**

1. **Event:** Soviets intervene in Gulf War.  
**Type of Event:** Dangerous local conflict.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Iraq saved from military defeat; Soviet forces permanently deployed in Iraq.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Improves Soviet military and diplomatic position in the Middle East while hastening the collapse of the Iranian government.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Soviets encouraged to seek further gains in region.
  
2. **Event:** Coup by pro-Soviet forces in Egypt.  
**Type of Event:** Soviets exploit third country political situation.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Egypt breaks all ties with the U.S. and grants extensive basing rights to the U.S.S.R. Position in Egypt instrumental in securing Soviet gains in Jordan, Syria, and Sudan; however Saudi Arabia, alarmed at extent of Soviet gains, returns to strong anti-Soviet stance.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Position in Egypt instrumental in securing Soviet gains in Jordan, Syria, and Sudan; however Saudi Arabia, alarmed at extent of Soviet gains, returns to strong anti-Soviet stance.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Soviet leaders encouraged to seek hegemony over entire Middle East.
  
3. **Event:** Revolution in Mexico.  
**Type of Event:** Political upheaval in third country.  
**Immediate Outcome:** U.S. forces involved in Mexican civil war; minor clashes between U.S. and Cuban air and naval units.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** N/A

- Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S. attention monopolized by Mexican crisis, giving the Soviet Union a freer hand in the rest of the world.
4. **Event:** Dissolution of NATO.  
**Type of Event:** Soviets exploit political shifts in U.S. allies.  
**Immediate Outcome:** U.S. forces removed from Europe.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** N/A  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Soviets are free to shift forces to East Asia and the Middle East.
  5. **Event:** Accelerated Japanese rearmament and Sino-American rapprochement.  
**Type of Event:** Political events in third countries.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Increased U.S. security commitments and military deployments in Northeast Asia.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Northeast Asia becomes the focus of great power competition.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Facing a renewed U.S. commitment to the defense of Northeast Asia, Soviets seek to gain leverage by initiating an offensive in the Middle East.
  6. **Event:** Pro-Soviet coup in Kuwait.  
**Type of Event:** Target of opportunity--Vulnerable U.S. ally.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Pro-Soviet forces occupy Kuwait.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Anti-Soviet reaction in the Gulf region allows Saudi Arabia and Oman to resume open security ties with the U.S.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** U.S. committed to the defense of Saudi Arabia, while Soviets conclude that defeat of Saudis is essential to avoid general deterioration of their position in the region.
  7. **Event:** Soviets attack Saudi Arabia.  
**Type of Event:** Calculated attack.  
**Immediate Outcome:** U.S. counter-intervention leads to extensive fighting between U.S. and Soviet forces.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** U.S. need to protect lines of supply leads to U.S./Soviet naval clashes, which contribute to spreading the conflict.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Both powers committed to seeking military victory in the Gulf, even at the risk of spreading conflict elsewhere.
  8. **Event:** U.S.-Soviet naval clashes.  
**Type of Event:** Clash of great power forces.  
**Immediate Outcome:** Both great powers suffer losses; Soviet naval potential seriously threatened.  
**Linkage to Subsequent Crises:** Soviet attempts to intimidate Japan fail; Asian allies join with U.S. in attacking naval facilities on Soviet territory.  
**Impact on Great Power Decision-Making:** Both great powers committed to general war.

Since the purpose of this study is to provide frameworks for the analysis of wide-ranging strategic and military questions, the scenarios were designed to illustrate significantly different patterns of escalation. In general, the escalatory patterns of the scenarios comprise two basic types. Scenarios Alpha, Gamma, Epsilon, and Zeta can be

thought of as "linear" in form. They represent situations in which a crisis focused on one region or event escalates through a number of steps until it becomes a major conflict between the great powers. Scenarios Beta and Delta and Omega are more "cumulative" in form. In these scenarios, the eventual conflict is brought about by the combined impact of two or more initially unrelated and geographically distant crises. The distinction between these two types of escalatory environments is significant to the military planner because of the different types of short-term decisions which they are likely to engender prior to the conflict and, accordingly, the differing military problems which might be expected when a building political crisis erupts into armed conflict.

It should be noted, of course, that this distinction is one of degree only. Neither our scenarios nor real-world developments fit entirely within these or any other artificial categories. In particular, the early phase of all of the scenarios includes isolated conflicts and crises whose importance lies not in their being a direct precursor of more serious conflict, but rather in their impact on great power relations, the expectations and concerns of decision-makers, and the international environment in general. With these reservations, this distinction between escalatory patterns does provide a useful analytical tool in thinking about long-term strategic problems.

#### **Examples of Linear Escalation**

Scenario Alpha provides a direct example of linear escalation. Once the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. introduce forces into the Middle East, both are caught up in a series of moves which are justified only in that they are necessary to maintain their respective positions in that region. The need to support troops deployed in Syria leads the U.S.S.R. to intervene in Turkey and Iraq, and then in Yugoslavia. The Western nations, for their part, feel obliged to resist these Soviet initiatives, thus producing a series of incidents and low intensity conflicts. In the end, the proximity of the growing conflict in Yugoslavia to the central front leads both sides to raise the readiness of their respective forces to such a level that a misperception of Western intentions on the part of Soviet commanders leaves Soviet leaders believing that they have no option but to launch a general "preemptive" offensive.

In Scenario Gamma, the focus of escalation is provided by the parallel deterioration of conditions in East and West Germany. In the East, the increasingly real fear of open rebellion in the D.D.R. leads to a large increase in the number and aggressiveness of Soviet forces in that country and eventually--as a result of actions against attempted desertions to the West by German civilian and military personnel--to cross-border operations by Soviet

forces. In the West, meanwhile, the radicalization of the F.R.G. and its political alienation from other western nations prevents the U.S. or its European allies from controlling the situation effectively, while Soviet perceptions of the continuing geographical and historic unity of Western Europe leads Soviet leaders to the conclusion that NATO must be attacked as a whole in order to neutralize the radicalized F.R.G.

China is the focal point of crisis in Scenario Epsilon. The growing Sino/Soviet conflict in this scenario is the driving force behind the tactical decisions taken by both the U.S.S.R. and the United States, and the eruption of the Sino/Soviet conflict into open war is instrumental in the eventual Soviet decision to attack U.S. strategic defense assets.

In Scenario Zeta, the driving force behind escalation is the deteriorating situation throughout Eastern Europe and eventually within the Soviet Union itself. This process culminates in a takeover of the Soviet government by radical elements of the military and security forces at the end of the scenario, and in a decision by those leaders to launch a nuclear strike against Western Europe in a last-ditch effort to prevent what they believe is an imminent NATO intervention in Eastern Europe.

A common factor in all these scenarios is that, at least potentially, all the parties have a considerable amount of time to prepare for the coming conflict in a given geographical area. History suggests that nations do not always take advantage of the opportunities provided by such warning. So far as Western forces are concerned, Scenarios Alpha and Zeta present situations which are preceded by considerable periods of political, military, and industrial mobilization, with the result that the forces of the U.S. and its allies are at or near their full potential strength and that war industries are well developed by the outbreak of war. Scenarios Gamma and Epsilon, in contrast, present situations in which U.S. forces are unable to reach their potential maximum strength. In Scenario Gamma, this is due to the prior withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe, a move which is only partially reversed by the outbreak of hostilities. Scenario Epsilon presents a more extreme example of this problem since it assumes that U.S. conventional forces had been decreased significantly over the course of the decade and a half preceding the outbreak of hostilities.

The fact that conflict in these scenarios is focused on a precise geographical location also has definite implications for the type of military forces most directly involved in the initial stages of conflict. The principal burden of operations is placed on the land and tactical air forces of the two sides; naval operations play a secondary role. The relative



weakness of the United States in land forces at the scene of conflict is the most important military limitation faced by potential U.S. commanders in Scenarios Gamma and Epsilon.

Finally, since the outbreak of war in these scenarios is usually preceded by a prolonged build-up of both sides' forces in relative proximity to each other, the potential for inadvertent conflict resulting from local accidents, errors by tactical commanders, or momentary misperceptions of the other side's intentions is considerable. Scenario Alpha, in particular, illustrates this potential problem.

### **Examples of Cumulative Escalation**

The conflicts described by Scenarios Beta, Delta, and Omega result from the interaction of events in two or more disparate areas.

In Scenario Beta, the direct trigger of great power conflict is the U.S. escalation of a local conflict in Korea by means of a nuclear attack on North Korea, which leads to Soviet reprisals against U.S. naval units and eventually to strikes by both great powers against naval bases in the other's territory. The fundamental cause of the United States' desperate position in Korea, however, is the fact that U.S. forces have already become engaged in Iran and are urgently needed in Israel as a result of another, unrelated, local crisis. The need to cope with these problems, while still maintaining an adequate deterrent force in Europe, strains U.S. military capacities to such a point that U.S. leaders perceive no alternative but to employ nuclear weapons in Korea, despite the obvious risks involved, in an effort to liquidate at least one of their ongoing commitments.

Similarly, in Scenario Delta, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. are brought to the brink of war by the interaction of conflicts in the Far East and Southwest Asia. In this scenario, the Soviet Union provokes war in Korea in an attempt to divert the U.S. from operations on the U.S.S.R.'s southern flank. Rather than allowing itself to be diverted, however, the U.S. employs nuclear weapons in Korea and steps up the pressure in Southwest Asia. The general conflict that ensues does not concern either Korea or Southwest Asia so much as the global balance of influence of the two great powers.

The interaction between events in East Asia and the Middle East is also critical in Scenario Omega, but in this case the relationships are reversed. In this scenario, the Soviet Union initiates hostilities in the Persian Gulf in an attempt to gain leverage in its ongoing competition with China and Japan by disrupting oil supplies and demonstrating the U.S. military guarantees. Intervention by U.S. rapid deployment forces limits Soviet gains and

triggers a global naval confrontation between the two powers. Fighting spreads to Northeast Asia when China, Japan, and South Korea join with the U.S. to attack key Soviet Pacific naval facilities.

The more fluid nature of the Beta, Delta, and Omega scenarios places very different demands on U.S. military forces and planning structures than do the situations considered previously. Since the potential locations of the major U.S./Soviet conflict are either multiple or indeterminate, a premium is placed on highly mobile forces such as naval and strategic air units. Scenarios Beta and Omega explicitly lead to a naval war, and such a conclusion is also one likely outcome of Scenario Delta.

The Beta and Delta scenarios do not necessarily assume a protracted period of military and industrial mobilization prior to the outbreak of U.S./Soviet conflict. While the forces of both powers are engaged in various local and regional conflicts over the period described by the scenario, the situations lack the considerable potential for political mobilization which existed in the more "linear" scenarios. Accordingly, while the standing forces of both powers are expected to be mobilized prior to the outbreak of war, they would not be significantly expanded or enhanced. On the whole, the situations would be faced with the forces at hand. Scenario Omega is a partial exception to this rule, as it postulates a limited mobilization--expansion of rapid deployment forces and build-up in Northeast Asia--prior to the outbreak of hostilities.

### Issues for Security Planning

In addition to providing general examples of escalatory sequences, the seven global scenarios highlight a number of specific issues, including political, military and logistical problems, for U.S. security planning. Table 12, below, summarizes the key issues which are illustrated by the global scenarios.

**Table 12. Key Planning Issues**

#### **Scenario Alpha**

- How should the U.S. define "acceptable" and "unacceptable" levels of Soviet military activity in the Western Hemisphere?
- Can Soviet military actions in the Middle East be cut off without direct U.S. intervention (both in case of conflict and in crisis situations short of conflict)? How can northern tier countries be protected from Soviet retribution?
- How can the U.S. sustain a greatly expanded naval and ground presence in the Middle East?
- What options would be available to NATO in the event of internal conflicts in Yugoslavia? Can low-intensity operations be sustained without leading to mobilization on the central front?

#### **Scenario Beta**

- How should the U.S. respond to significant gains by Iran in the Gulf war and/or to Soviet intervention in Iraq?
- How could the U.S. respond to increased Soviet pressure on Pakistan?
- What options would be available to the U.S. in the event of a disintegration of the Iranian national government?
- What logistical measures would be required to sustain long-term U.S. involvement in a low-intensity conflict in Southwest Asia?
- How could the U.S. utilize nuclear weapons in Korea without provoking an unacceptable Soviet response?
- How should the U.S. fight a nuclear naval war in the Pacific? What actions might prevent a Soviet response against continental U.S. targets?

#### **Scenario Gamma**

- How would an internal conflict in Yugoslavia likely develop? What options would be available to the West if it wished to become involved?
- What options would be available to the West in the event of serious unrest in East Germany?
- Could Western Europe be defended if the F.R.G. pursued an independent course? What would be the optimum strategy?

#### **Scenario Delta**

- What would be the U.S. requirements for fighting a two-front war in Asia while maintaining sufficient forces to deter war in Europe?
- How could deterrence and/or defense in Korea be assured without U.S. access to Japanese bases?
- How could the U.S. defend eastern Turkey without triggering a conflict on the central front?
- What would be the key political, tactical, and logistical aspects of a prolonged low-intensity conflict in Southwest Asia?

#### **Scenario Epsilon**

- How could the U.S. military presence in Europe be reduced without precipitating adverse political or military trends?
- How should the U.S. respond to the use of nuclear weapons by Israel and/or to Soviet nuclear retaliation against Israel?
- How could a secure position be defined for Israel following a defeat in conflict with Syria?
- Could a partitioned South Africa be stable? What role should the U.S. play in such a situation?
- How could Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines be supported against internal and local opponents?
- How could the U.S. rebuild its military presence in Asia if forces had previously been withdrawn?
- What options would be available to the U.S. in the event of a Soviet nuclear strike against China, with and without ballistic missile defense systems?

#### **Scenario Zeta**

- How could the U.S. aid Nicaraguan insurgents in the final stages of a successful offensive while deterring Cuban and Soviet intervention?
- Should the U.S. aid Pakistan in the event of a new war with India? What form might such aid take?
- What would be the appropriate posture for NATO in the event of chronic unrest in Eastern Europe? Should it include aid to refugees and/or dissident forces?
- How can military and industrial preparations be carried out without provoking a preemptive Soviet attack?

- What are the natural fault lines within the Soviet leadership? What would happen to Soviet command lines in the event of an internal struggle?
- How could NATO respond to a Soviet nuclear strike against Western Europe in such a way as to lower the risk of a central nuclear exchange? Would a ground offensive into Eastern Europe be appropriate?

#### **Scenario Omega**

- How could the U.S. deal with a major conflict in Mexico while retaining freedom-of-action in the rest of the world?
- Should the U.S. maintain conventional forces in Europe if all nuclear weapons were withdrawn?
- How could the U.S. assist in the defence of Saudi Arabia against a major Soviet attack? What logistical arrangements would such a commitment require?
- How vulnerable would U.S. logistical facilities in northern and eastern Africa be to Soviet-sponsored local unrest? How could these best be defended?
- Should the U.S. strike naval bases on Soviet territory early in a conflict? How could Soviet retaliation be minimized?

The questions summarized in the table, above, include issues which are principally political in nature and others of a more strictly military order. In the first group are found issues for political intelligence forecasting as well as for policy planning, while the second includes logistical, as well as tactical problems. A few fundamental questions recur with only minor changes in several scenarios. These point to the key issues facing U.S. planners and decision makers in the coming decades.

Intelligence issues which arise in several of the scenarios include the evolution of Chinese and Japanese foreign policy, and possible development of internal conflicts in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, as well as the possible ramifications of ethnic and religious differences in South and Southwest Asia. These factors are largely outside the control of U.S. decision makers, but analyzing and forecasting them is of obvious importance for the United States. The hypothetical situations described in the scenarios illustrate a few of the more plausible options; other possible options could also be explored by changing one or more parameters of a given scenario.

How the United States should react to future international events and conditions is a question for political policy planning. The global scenarios illustrate a number of potential problems for which alternative solutions could be explored. How should the U.S. react to political shifts in Europe or the Far East? What role should it play in internal conflicts in Iran, Yugoslavia, or South Africa? How might NATO intervene in an East European crisis? Would it be possible to carry out industrial and military mobilization without triggering a premature conflict?

The hypothetical conflict situations outlined in the scenarios illustrate a variety of tactical and logistical problems which might potentially be faced by U.S. forces. How

could U.S. forces sustain expanded military presence in the Mediterranean or long-term low intensity conflict in Southwest Asia? Would it be possible to meet simultaneous contingencies in Korea and the Middle East? Could operations in Europe or East Asia be conducted without access to West Germany or Japan, respectively? How would the deployment of partial or general strategic defenses affect the the military capabilities and options of the great powers? How might long-term, force-structure decisions affect U.S. ability to respond to unanticipated contingencies? The political contexts outlined in the scenarios provide frameworks in which these and other technical questions can be explored by means of simulation or planning exercises.

It should be noted that while the principal military contingency in each scenario takes place at the end of the sequence described, a number of the scenarios also include significant military activity before that time. U.S. intervention in Iran, in Scenario Beta; slowly escalating conflict in Southwest Asia, in Scenario Delta; and the Mexican civil war, in Scenario Omega are examples of such events. While "solutions" for these situations are given in the scenarios, it is intended that they too could be used as the basis for simulation and planning exercises in which other possible options are explored.

In general, the global scenarios provide a context in which these and other planning questions can be examined, and alternative solutions compared. In those instances in which our scenarios postulate a particular solution, this is done chiefly to advance the narrative. It is intended that readers also will explore other possible courses of action and analyze their implications for the development of the scenario in question. This study provides a number of realistic contexts in which these questions can be considered, and alternative answers evaluated.

**Appendices**

**U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS**

**Appendix A**

**NORTHEAST ASIA**

## **U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS**

### **Appendix A. NORTHEAST ASIA\***

The Korean Peninsula has been the scene of one major war and numerous violent incidents involving armed forces of the United States and the Soviet Union and its allies, and retains considerable potential to be the theater of a renewed confrontation. The unresolved political situation of the divided country is a permanent source of potential conflict, while the presence of U.S. military forces in South Korea and the existence of strong ties linking North Korea to both the Soviet Union and China ensure that the great powers' stakes in any such conflict would be high. The proximity of Japan, currently a close U.S. ally and potentially a future military power in its own right, further increases the importance of the peninsula.

#### **PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

Most plausible scenarios for U.S./Soviet conflict in northeast Asia begin with problems within and between the two Korean states. Short-term scenarios, those conceivable within the next five years, deal with such problems in the context of the current state of great power relations, while longer term scenarios take account of the possible evolution of key international relationships and their effects on the region.

#### **Independent North Korean Attack on South Korea**

North Korea is known to have the ability to launch a massive offensive across the demilitarized zone with very little warning. Further, it is believed to have sufficient stockpiles of military equipment to sustain a major war for 90 days without resupply. It would be physically possible, therefore, for North Korea to launch a war against the South at any time, even without the support of its Soviet or Chinese allies.

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\* This portion of the paper is the result of a discussion held at the Institute for Defense Analyses on November 5, 1985. Participants included Barry Blechman, Ralph Clough, Ilpyong Kim, Tom Robinson, Marc Smyrl and Victor Utgoff. The specific views expressed in this paper are not necessarily endorsed by each of these individuals.



Two prior conditions would probably have to exist, however, for the threat of such a North Korean attack to be plausible. First of all, the North Korean leadership would have to have some reason to believe that U.S. forces would not come to South Korea's assistance or, at least, that their forces could establish a stable position before American troops could intervene effectively and that U.S. leaders might prefer to negotiate a settlement rather than contest that position militarily. The development of such perceptions among the North Koreans would seem to assume the emergence of substantial strains between the United States and Seoul. Moreover, these strains would have to have been great enough to have led to the withdrawal of American troops from their current positions near the demilitarized zone, which virtually ensures their involvement in any new war. (The troops could be withdrawn from the peninsula all together or simply withdrawn to more southern positions.)

Second, North Korean leaders would have had to come to believe that the political and social evolution of South Korea had resulted in a significant decrease in the stability and cohesion of the South Korean government and in the military potential of its armed forces. This last conceivably could be due to the South Korean Army becoming increasingly hard-pressed to maintain civil order in a deteriorating social situation, and in fact appearing to become affected itself by the social conflict.

These two crucial factors--the strength of the American commitment and the internal situation in South Korea--are in fact closely linked. Anti-Americanism in South Korea is concentrated at the two extremes of the political spectrum. On the left, primarily among student groups, anti-American feelings are based on opposition to U.S. political and economic "imperialism" and a submergence of Korean culture and interests in favor of American interests. This position is similar to that found in many developing countries. In Korea, this left-wing anti-Americanism merges with leftist opposition to the government in Seoul. The United States, seen as the sponsor and protector of the Seoul government, is held responsible for its authoritarianism and repressive excesses, whenever they occur.

On the political right, primarily within military circles, anti-Americanism is linked to extreme nationalism. Here, too, South Korea's dependency on the United States is at issue, but in this case military and political aspects of dependency are more important than its economic or cultural manifestations. The operational control of the South Korean Army by an American commander is particularly regretted. There is great resentment also of attempts by Americans--whether official or unofficial--to impose a more liberal and democratic political system in place of the current military-dominated government. In

general, there is an exaggerated view of the political influence wielded in South Korea by the United States influence which is alleged by some to be an affront to Korean independence and nationhood. From this perspective, the American military presence on the peninsula is seen not as a commitment to defend South Korea, but rather as an exploitation of Korea for America's own geo-strategic purposes.

Until now, these positions have represented isolated extremes in South Korean opinion. For the bulk of the population, as well as for the governing elite, South Korea's ties with the United States have brought the country economic prosperity and military security which it could never have attained otherwise. If these tangible benefits of association with the United States were to become less evident, however, it is possible that extreme positions would gain strength.

The value of the U.S. military presence in Korea has been called into question at high levels of the American government and the U.S. military establishment in the past. Proposals were made in 1976-78 to move American troops from their front line positions, or to withdraw them from the country altogether. A return of such proposals, combined with the continued reluctance of U.S. administrations to commit American troops into combat, a trend which has been evident--Grenada and one or two other exceptions notwithstanding--since the early 1970s, could lead to serious doubts in the South Korean military establishment as to the reliability of American security guarantees. Over time, particularly if reinforced by specific incidents, such as an American refusal to retaliate for a North Korean provocation, such doubts could bring the ROK military establishment into a position closer to that which has long been held by the extreme right in its nationalistic anti-Americanism.

Some disquiet has already emerged on the economic front, as a faltering world economy and more aggressive U.S. policies to protect American industries from Korean competition have come to be seen by some South Korean businessmen and government officials as threatening their prosperous but fragile economy. Virtually any restraint on South Korean exports to the United States causes resentments among South Koreans, in view of the much greater damage being done to the American economy by Japanese exports. Given growing protectionist sentiment in this country, however, more far-reaching barriers to free trade may be in prospect. A South Korean economic collapse, which could occur if exports to the United States were reduced sharply, would lend credence to the economic theories of the political left by demonstrating the unreliable, and in the end destructive, nature of the international capitalist system.

At the current time, social stability in South Korea is closely linked to prospects for movement towards a more open political system. Such movement, in turn, depends in large part on continued economic prosperity and military security. If the trends outlined above were to gain strength, both security and prosperity would be threatened, and political liberalization and the maintenance of social stability would in turn become more difficult. A complicating factor in the social evolution of South Korea is that while the extreme right and extreme left are similar in their anti-American attitudes, they oppose one another on almost every other issue. If adverse developments were to bring about a rise in extremism, therefore, the result could well be a loosening of ties to the United States, combined with a considerable increase in the level of social tension.

One possible outcome of such a situation would be the assumption of power by an authoritarian military government that would seek energetically, using violent methods, to crush the large and militant left-wing opposition. Considerable strife, confusion, and social violence would ensue. Further, South Korea would in all likelihood be distanced from its American protector both by the nationalistic anti-Americanism of its rulers (who might well play up this aspect of their program as one way to gain popular and military support) and by the probable critical reaction in the United States to the repressive policies which such a government would in all likelihood have to adopt in order to seize and maintain itself in power. Conflict between the U.S. and Republic of Korea governments on these issues could lead eventually to reductions or relocations of American troops on the peninsula, and to a general perception that the American commitment to defend South Korea would be far from automatic in the event of an emergency.

One additional development in South Korea would be of considerable importance in determining the plausibility of a North Korean decision to attack. Over the past 10 or 15 years, there has been a steady increase in South Korea's economic capacity relative to that of the North. Moreover, although still inferior to the North's in quantitative terms, South Korea's military potential has been increasing more rapidly than the North's for some time. If these trends were to continue, it is possible that a cross-over point could be reached in the mid-term. A deterioration in U.S./South Korean relations might stimulate a further increase the South's rate of military growth, particularly in its independent capacity to develop and produce weapons and other military equipment. Facing an abrupt shattering of the American commitment--or at least believing that this was the case--South Korea might even seek to develop and deploy nuclear weapons. There was such a program in South Korea in the 1970s and the country probably has the technical and scientific capability to

pursue such a project independently. The length of time that would be required for a determined South Korean effort to develop nuclear weapons would depend primarily on how quickly Seoul would be able to acquire the requisite nuclear materials, but as few as two or three years might be necessary. Such a development would clearly signal a radical change in the military and political balance on the Korean Peninsula.

The conjunction of these two trends in South Korea--anti-Americanism and social disorder on the one hand, and greater military strength and possible nuclear potential on the other--could lead Kim il Sung or his successors in Pyongyang to conclude that they faced a narrowing window in time within which they had an opportunity to carry out a successful attack. Believing that they had to act in the near future when conditions still appeared favorable, if risky, or be confronted indefinitely with superior South Korean economic and military power, it is not inconceivable that a North Korean government might decide to launch an offensive, regardless of the support or lack thereof of their allies in Moscow and Beijing.

#### **Great Power Reactions**

If the developments outlined here took place while the pattern of relations among the great powers was similar to that which now exists, it does not seem likely that either China or the Soviet Union would welcome a renewed conflict in Korea.

This assertion seems most definite in the case of China. The present trend in Chinese policy is towards more cooperative relations with the United States and a stabilizing role in East Asia overall, as Chinese leaders seek to concentrate their resources on, and to create political conditions conducive to, the economic modernization of their country. In pursuit of these goals, the Chinese have been moving recently to increase their trade with South Korea, to strengthen their political and economic ties to Japan and the United States, and to dampen tensions with the Soviet Union. In such a policy environment, China would strongly oppose aggressive policies on the part of North Korea, as any new war on the peninsula would almost certainly disrupt China's pursuit of its economic objectives.

The position of the Soviet Union in such circumstances is less clear, but certain factors also suggest a reluctance on the part of Soviet leaders to become involved in a new Korean confrontation. Such a development would clearly threaten the Soviet Union's policy of avoiding direct confrontations with the United States. A new war in Korea also would have a serious negative impact on Soviet/Japanese relations, which the Soviets have

been working to improve recently in order to gain access to Japanese technology and to encourage Japanese investments in the Soviet Far East. An aggressive move by North Korea also would go against the current "soft line" in Soviet policy towards Europe, as any hostile initiative by Pyongyang would almost certainly be severely criticized in Western Europe, reminding people of past Soviet transgressions, and thus undermining Soviet efforts to increase its political influence in Western Europe.

Under these circumstances, any North Korean offensive against the South would almost certainly take place without the prior approval or support of the Communist great powers. Despite this, if U.S. troops were not immediately involved, it is likely that North Korea would have at least an initial military advantage, in part traceable to the element of surprise. In such a situation, it is likely that South Korea would request U.S. assistance, even if relations between the two countries had previously been strained and U.S. ground forces were no longer in their current positions, or perhaps had left Korea altogether. (If U.S. troops were attacked, of course, American involvement would be virtually automatic. If, on the other hand, U.S./South Korean relations had deteriorated to such a point that there were absolutely no U.S. military presence in South Korea, the prospects for a quick North Korean victory would be much better. As this variant would not involve a significant risk of U.S./Soviet confrontation--and in any case would appear to be extremely unlikely during the next twenty years--it is not discussed further.)

If the U.S. government did decide to come to the aid of South Korea, American support would likely include participation by any ground troops that had remained in Korea and those nearby, particularly the Marine division on Okinawa and the Army division in Hawaii. The U.S. also would provide tactical air support to the South Korean forces, using units already in the country and those planned for rapid reinforcement. The United States might also carry out an extensive strategic air offensive against North Korea. All these moves would be intended to bring the military situation under control rapidly, without the introduction of excessive numbers of U.S. ground troops.

This last point is critical. No American administration in the foreseeable future would risk a repetition of the 1950-53 Korean war, with its 50,000 U.S. casualties, if any other option were available. The Vietnam War has strongly reinforced the message of Korea--that the U.S. should not fight protracted, limited conflicts, particularly in Asia. In this context, it is necessary to consider whether the use of tactical nuclear weapons might be seen as a plausible option by American decision makers. Such weapons are currently deployed with U.S. units in Korea and would presumably still be there as long as any U.S.

forces remain on the peninsula. It is possible, of course, that in the political climate assumed in this scenario, nuclear weapons might have been withdrawn along with U.S. ground forces. Nevertheless, given the accessibility of Korea to carrier-based air power, the United States would retain the ability to carry out nuclear strikes throughout the peninsula, if such operations were desired. The threat of nuclear strike would of course be implicit in any U.S./North Korean conflict; and the U.S. might make explicit moves early in the conflict to ensure and accentuate the North Koreans' perception of this danger.

The Soviets and Chinese, for their part, would be unlikely to stand by if North Korea were threatened with total defeat, even if they had previously opposed its initiation of the war. If nothing else, their interest in preventing each other from gaining a dominant position in the North could lead to their mutual involvement. North Korea's primary need would almost certainly be for air defense capabilities to offset the presumed massive use of American air power. The Soviet Union, and to a lesser extent the P.R.C., would be in a position to provide sophisticated anti-aircraft systems, both ground- and air-based, and perhaps advisory personnel to help man them. Given the pattern of great power interests and relations that has been postulated for this scenario, however, direct Soviet participation would not be likely to exceed this level. Conceivably, China might threaten--perhaps privately--to become involved if U.S. and South Korean troops were again approaching the Yalu.

### **Plausible Outcomes**

In a situation such as this, the three great powers would in all probability seek a speedy negotiated end to hostilities. Since neither side would be willing to see its client destroyed, or even allow it to suffer a crushing defeat, it would be necessary, before serious negotiations could be undertaken, not only for the original North Korean offensive to have been defeated and rolled back, but also for the U.S./South Korean forces to refrain from moving too far into North Korea itself. The outcome of the conflict, therefore, would depend first on the ability of the South Korean armed forces and political system to withstand the original shock, on the willingness of the U.S. to become involved, and then on the amount of influence that the great powers could bring to bear on their respective allies to compel a termination of hostilities.

A potential complicating factor in this situation is the competition between China and the Soviet Union for influence in North Korea. It is possible that, by playing one of its great power allies against the other, North Korea could succeed in obtaining more support

from both than either had originally intended to provide, both on the military and diplomatic levels. Despite this, if the general pattern of great power interests and relations resembled the current situation, it does not seem likely that this support would lead to direct great power confrontation. Indeed, it is likely that such confrontations would be carefully avoided by the great powers involved.

Accordingly, while this scenario contains the risk of engagements between U.S. and Soviet aircraft and air defense forces--and almost certainly would involve military conflict, perhaps on a large scale, between U.S. and North Korean ground and air units--the risk of escalation would probably not be great. And the risks that did exist would hinge largely on the imponderables of the early battles.

If the North were tremendously successful in its early attacks, the United States might perceive little alternative to surrender but the use of nuclear weapons. Any such use would create a situation whose outcome is distinctly difficult to predict. If, on the other hand, South Korea stemmed the attack rapidly and began to move aggressively toward the Chinese border, it might be difficult for U.S. policy makers to dissuade the ROK's leaders from seeking to unify the peninsula once and for all; indeed, U.S. decision makers might also reach the conclusion that the time was ripe to conquer North Korea. In such a situation, there would be considerable risk of the introduction of either Chinese or Soviet combat units, or both, and the opening of a major conflict between the U.S. and USSR on the peninsula--and perhaps elsewhere as well. In short, the risk of great power conflict in this scenario would depend on whether the military situation caused the great powers to reassess their interests and objectives. The more extensive their reappraisals, the greater the risk of war between them.

### **South Korean Attack on North Korea**

A variation of the scenario specifying South Korean internal conditions described above, if combined with certain events in North Korea, could lead to a situation in which the Seoul government considered launching an attack on the North.

If a militantly nationalistic government were to take power in Seoul and continued to improve South Korea's military position, particularly if it developed nuclear weapons, a succession struggle or other major shake-up in Pyongyang might provide a perceived opportunity for a successful "northern expedition." It unlikely that any U.S. government would sanction such an action, and it is thus necessary to assume that the attack could take place only following a break with the United States. In such a case, it is not clear that the

U.S. would come to the aid of the South Korean aggressor, assuming such aid were required. Even if the United States did find it necessary to become involved, avoiding direct conflict with the Soviet Union would likely be a top priority. The roles of the great powers in this scenario, in fact, would closely resemble their roles in the first scenario, with the exception that the parts would be reversed. The United States would probably seek to restrain its ally; while the Soviet Union would try to prevent North Korea's defeat. The overall probability of this chain of events, however, must be considered to be very low. In the face of Soviet and Chinese military power, it is difficult to imagine any South Korean government attacking the North, no matter how great the disarray in Pyongyang.

Alternatively, an attack might be launched by any South Korean government--virtually regardless of its relationship with the United States--in response to North Korean provocations, particularly any renewed attempt to assassinate South Korean officials or any overt attempt to incite rebellion inside South Korea. In these cases, however, the South Korean action would most likely be an isolated punitive strike, perhaps utilizing air power, rather than any major ground invasion of the North. Although military incidents and heightened tensions could follow from such an event, serious escalation to include a substantial risk of U.S./Soviet conflict would not be likely.

#### **Soviet-Backed North Korean Attack on South Korea**

Over the longer term, it is certainly possible that relations among the great powers will have evolved in such a way as to make one or more of the powers less reluctant to seek confrontation. Most importantly, if the Soviet Union became less adverse to confrontations, Soviet leaders might perceive the situation in Korea as providing opportunities for action against the United States.

This scenario assumes not only a deterioration in U.S./Soviet relations, but the termination, however gradual, of the current Sino/American rapprochement. It is difficult to imagine the Soviet Union precipitating conflict in Korea in the face of continued Sino/American harmony, as such a move could lead to a formal military alliance between the U.S. and the P.R.C. (and Japan), and perhaps a war that extended well beyond Korea. Further, Soviet encouragement of a North Korean attack also would probably not take place unless Soviet/Japanese relations either had improved to the point where the Japanese would welcome Soviet domination of Korea (an extremely unlikely development) or, more realistically, that Soviet/Japanese relations had deteriorated so far that Soviet leaders concluded they no longer had anything to lose with regard to Japan's potential reactions.



Given these assumptions, it is possible to imagine several scenarios in which the U.S.S.R. might look favorably upon, or even encourage, a North Korean attack on South Korea. These situations can be divided into two general categories: Actions that aimed at the speedy extension of North Korean control (and with it, Soviet influence) over the entire peninsula, and actions whose principal purpose would be to tie down American forces.

#### Variant A

A Soviet-sponsored North Korean grab for South Korea could come as a result of an extreme variation of the internal Korean situation described in the first scenario. If the U.S. military commitment to South Korea had been abandoned entirely--at least in the perceptions of the Soviets and North Koreans--and the Seoul regime appeared to be near collapse, the Soviets and the North Koreans, in the context of the harsher international environment assumed for this scenario, might conclude that the South could be taken at relatively low cost.

This move would be especially attractive if Soviet relations with China and Japan had deteriorated along with relations between both the Soviet Union and the United States and between the U.S. and China. In this context of symmetrically conflictive great power relations, Soviet support for a North Korean attack on the South might be intended by Soviet leaders to secure the predominant influence in a unified Korea, thus preventing a potential increase in Chinese or Japanese influence in the region. If China and Japan were not only hostile to the Soviet Union but also moving towards open alliance with each other, Soviet actions to encourage a North Korean attack might well be almost unavoidable. Soviet leaders would reason in this case that if they and Pyongyang did not act preemptively, the Sino/Japanese alliance would eventually support unification of the peninsula under the leadership of South Korea.

The risk of great power conflict in this scenario lies in the possibility that the Soviet Union had overestimated the degree to which the United States had become estranged from South Korea. The political and economic tensions between the two countries notwithstanding, it is conceivable that the U.S. would respond to the North Korean attack by reintroducing ground combat forces and air power to the peninsula. Assuming that South Korea's own forces had been able to delay the North's offensive sufficient to provide enough time for the the U.S. to act, the result could be a classic ground war in Korea. Moreover, in this situation, unlike the first scenario, insofar as the Soviet Union had encouraged the North Korean attack to begin with, it presumably would perceive

greater reason to help defend the North should the introduction of American forces turn the tide of battle. This greater Soviet involvement might also pertain to the potential use of nuclear weapons once the North had been put on the defensive.

#### **Variant B**

A less far-fetched and even more dangerous Soviet motive for encouraging aggression in Korea would be a desire to distract American attention and tie down significant U.S. forces because of another actual or impending confrontation. Such an action might be contemplated if the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were already engaged in hostilities elsewhere in the world, for example. A war in Korea also might be launched preemptively by the Soviet Union in order to provide itself with greater freedom-of-action in other regions by tying down the substantial portion of American military power required to defend Korea. (It is assumed that conditions on the Korean Peninsula would be such as to encourage Pyongyang to go along with the Soviet initiative--or even to have initiated an action which the Soviets decided to take advantage of).

Unlike the previous cases, this scenario would not require a loosening of U.S./South Korean ties, very much the opposite. Since the purpose of the exercise from the Soviet point of view would be to engage U.S. troops, this option would be effective only if significant U.S. involvement in Korea were ensured. As in previous scenarios, however, a weakening of the South Korean government and military would increase the plausibility of the scenario. The less capable were the Republic of Korea's armed forces, the greater the American commitment would have to be.

Since the assumed Soviet purpose in this action would be to tie down U.S. forces while maintaining their own freedom-of-action, it is likely that the bulk of the fighting would still be assigned to North Korean forces. It could be expected, however, that the Soviets would be more generous with various forms of support. It is possible that certain Soviet units (air defense, intelligence, communications, etc.) would be deployed in Korea. Soviet air units, based either in Korea or in the Soviet Far East also would be likely to participate in the war.

This scenario assumes that relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China would have become considerably less harmonious than they are currently. It is difficult to imagine the Soviet Union launching an operation such as this unless it were certain of at least Chinese neutrality, if not of open Chinese support. At the same time, it is hard to understand why the Chinese would go along with such a move,

unless the current leadership had been replaced with a pro-Moscow faction. Short of such a radical change in Beijing, the advantages to China of the move are not obvious.

### **Plausible Outcomes**

Faced with a Soviet-sponsored North Korean attack, and possibly a contingent requirement for American forces elsewhere in the world, American recourse to nuclear options in Korea could not be ruled out. If a significant U.S. force were on the verge of being overrun in the initial North Korean attack, the probability that the U.S. would make use of nuclear weapons could be relatively great. American decision makers would seek through the prompt use of tactical nuclear weapons to halt the North Korean attack and force the Soviet Union to negotiate an end to the conflict. They would fear that a failure to take such an action would lead either to a major defeat in Korea or, at best, to a protracted and costly campaign on the peninsula with large numbers of American casualties.

It is not clear that such a step on the part of the United States would necessarily lead to retaliation in kind by the Soviet Union, particularly if the American strike had been aimed at North Korean, rather than Soviet, units, and if it came when the South was still on the defensive. Even in the worst case, Soviet stakes in the Korean situation are not so great as to run a serious risk of escalation to global nuclear war. Clearly, the situation would be an extremely dangerous one, but if Soviet units had not been hit and if the initial U.S. strike had been relatively small, a Soviet counterstrike would not be automatic. The Soviet Union might also see benefit in an unanswered American use of nuclear weapons in support of its position with other Asian and European nations.

The possibility of an American nuclear use aside, it is unclear how far and in what directions the conflict in Korea might escalate. The war could be confined to the peninsula, turning into the type of indeterminate conflict waged in Korea after the first year of the 1950-53 war. If either side threatened to overrun the peninsula, however, the losing great power would have to decide whether to accept a defeat or to escalate the scope or extent of the war. Much would depend on what else was happening in the world.

### **IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

A number of scenarios that center on Japan, rather than Korea, also merit some consideration as potential sources of U.S./Soviet conflict. These conflicts include the Soviet/Japanese dispute over the Soviet-occupied islands north of Japan, potential Sino/Japanese conflicts, and, in the longer term, strategic confrontation between the Soviet

Union and a China-Japan alliance. None of these conflicts, however, appear to be plausible sources of U.S./Soviet confrontations over the next twenty years.

The possibility of a Sino-Soviet conflict leading to a U.S./Soviet confrontation also is a possibility. A direct attack by one Communist giant against the other appears extremely unlikely, however. And the regional source of such a confrontation appears far more likely to appear in southeast, than in northeast, Asia, however, and is thus discussed separately in Appendix B.

## **PATHWAYS TO U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT**

Barring premeditated Soviet attacks of the sort considered in the final scenarios, U.S./Soviet conflict in Korea would occur as a result of developments in the two Korean states themselves. A fundamental assumption of all scenarios, however, is that neither of the Korean states will be in a position to defeat the other if the adversary state's great power sponsor is prepared to intervene in its defense. A nuclear-armed South Korea might be an exception to this rule.

In this context, a war started by one or the other of the Korean states would involve the great powers only if the initiating state had erred gravely in its assumptions concerning great power commitment to its adversary. Conflicts of this sort could lead to incidents between the great powers, but they would be unlikely to result in large-scale confrontation. Instead, it is possible that the great powers would cooperate to bring the conflict to an end, this being in their common interest.

Direct action by the Soviet Union could lead more clearly to great power conflict, if the U.S.S.R. chose Korea as a theater for horizontal escalation. The scope and level of great power commitment and conflict in this case would depend primarily on the general world situation, or on the state of other ongoing conflicts, rather than on conditions and developments in Korea itself.

Generic paths to U.S./Soviet conflict are traced in Figure A-1. There are four such paths. Readers should note that only those paths which lead to a substantial probability of U.S./Soviet conflict or incidents, or at least to a significantly higher level of great power tension, are included in chart below.

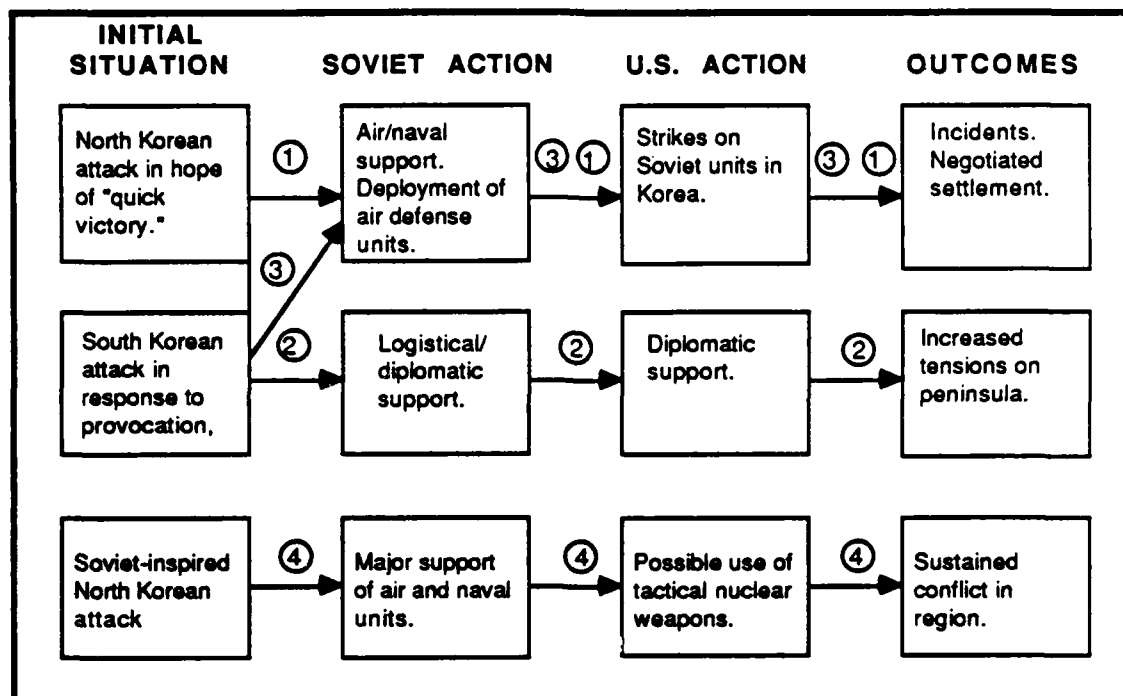


Figure A-1. Pathways to U.S.-Soviet Conflict, Northeast Asia

## LINKS TO OTHER REGIONS

Strategic links clearly exist between events in northeast Asia and developments in the rest of the world. As indicated in the second of the scenarios presented here, Korea is a potential theater for Soviet horizontal escalation as long as the U.S. commitment to South Korea remains credible. The permanently high level of readiness maintained by North Korean forces provides an additional element of uncertainty in this context, since such escalation could come at any time with little advanced warning.

Northeast Asia is also a probable area of horizontal escalation for Sino/Soviet conflicts. Soviet units stationed along China's Manchurian border would almost inevitably assume a threatening posture and perhaps go so far as to initiate cross-border attacks, if a serious Sino/Soviet confrontation developed elsewhere in Asia. The United States could become involved in such a confrontation if it were supporting China and still possessed military facilities in Korea, as has been discussed in the paper on Southeast Asia.

**Appendix B**

**SOUTHEAST ASIA**

## U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS

### Appendix B. SOUTHEAST ASIA\*

Southeast Asia is an important region containing a number of dynamic local actors. Moreover, the region is perceived to have considerable strategic interest by the United States, the Soviet Union, and China, each of whom has ties of varying strength to local states. Given the United States' previous military involvement in Southeast Asia, as well as the Soviet Union's only limited involvement in the region, the risk of great power conflict arising directly from a local situation is probably quite small. Still, there may be some possibility of U.S./Soviet conflict in the region arising from an ongoing crisis involving one or more local states and China. It may thus be helpful to begin this analysis with a brief overview of the principal actors in the Southeast Asian region.

#### MAJOR ACTORS

It is clear that *China* will be a key actor in any military conflict in East or Southeast Asia, including those that might lead to fighting between U.S. and Soviet military units. The potential for any such major power confrontation will thus be profoundly influenced by the state of the P.R.C.'s relations with each of the great powers.

Currently, China's leaders are seeking to improve relations with both great powers while still maintaining as great a degree of independence and freedom of maneuver as possible. Success of its economic development and military modernization programs would greatly aid China's quest for independence in international politics, but even under the best of circumstances, these goals will remain to be achieved several decades in the future. In the foreseeable future, the P.R.C. will thus remain dependent on Western cooperation to assure economic growth and on the avoidance of conflict with the Soviet Union to carry out modernization successfully. These twin requirements will act as a constraint on Chinese leaders.

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\* This Appendix is based on a discussion held at the Institute for Defense Analyses on October 1, 1985. Participants included Barry Blechman, Harry Harding, Robbin Laird, Thomas Robinson, Marc Smyrl, Victor Utgoff, and Ben Woodward. The specific views expressed in this paper are not necessarily endorsed by each of these individuals.

The alternative for China would be to abandon the current path towards modernization, possibly in favor of a renewed emphasis on Maoist ideology. Such a reversal would likely force Beijing to adopt a more inward-looking policy. Although it might logically be accompanied by a more radical propaganda position and declaratory foreign policy stance, the military capabilities necessary to support an interventionist foreign policy would not be available to Beijing. Such a course is not considered likely, in any event, and the analysis that follows assumes that China will continue with its present economic and social modernization, although the pace of change may slow somewhat over time.

Under this assumption, certain factors will limit the near-term improvement of relations between the P.R.C. and either the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. Sino-Soviet relations, although they are expected to improve somewhat in the coming decade, will not likely return to the close ties of the 1950s. The well-known disagreements concerning the Sino-Soviet border and China's opposition to Soviet actions in Afghanistan and Cambodia are symptomatic of a more fundamental divergence of interests between the two countries, stemming from both racial sources and questions of geo-politics.

The question of Taiwan, meanwhile, stands in the way of much further rapprochement with the United States. Also of great significance is the desire of Chinese leaders to keep cultural and ideological control over their country, which necessarily means restraints on "Westernizing" influences. Taking these considerations into account, it seems likely that the present and near-future leadership of the P.R.C.--all else being equal will seek primarily to maintain their independence of the great powers, while striving over the long term to increase their own influence in regional affairs.

Although the Chinese may thus pursue a declared policy which ostensibly seeks equidistance between the great powers, in practice they may well lean somewhat toward the West. There are sound geo-strategic reasons for the P.R.C. to favor somewhat closer ties to the United States, so long as they do not jeopardize correct relations with the Soviet Union. The U.S., even in the worst of cases, is comfortably distant, whereas the Soviets pose an immediate and permanent military danger on the Chinese border. The U.S. along with its allies also has far more to offer in economic terms.

*Vietnam* is the most aggressive of the regional actors in Southeast Asia. Its continuing military operations in Laos and Cambodia have as a clear goal the domination of greater Indochina. Understandably, they have aroused the suspicions and concerns of the other countries in the region. Vietnam is the only country in Southeast Asia that is



currently engaged in military activities, and the only regional power in a position to provoke a wider conflict through its actions. Its military operations have already brought Vietnam into open, large-scale military conflict with China in the past (and continue to lead to sporadic border incidents) and have also led to sporadic military incidents with Thailand.

The situation is complicated by Vietnam's role as a major ally of the Soviet Union, as well as by its historic enmity toward China. Vietnam can be considered in many respects as a second Soviet front against China, and as such is regarded by the Chinese as much more of a threat than it might be otherwise. The question of how far the Soviets would be willing to support a Vietnamese initiative by bringing pressure, military or otherwise, to bear on Vietnam's enemies remains unanswered. But this possibility must be borne in mind, even in situations which, at first glance, do not seem to involve the Soviet Union directly.

Situated at the edge of the area of Vietnamese expansion, *Thailand* is currently in the uncomfortable position of providing refuge and limited support for groups of Cambodian refugees that have fled from the Vietnamese. As some of these groups are attempting to continue the armed struggle against Vietnam, there is some danger that Thailand could be drawn into the fighting. It is generally agreed that Thailand would be incapable of resisting a major Vietnamese attack and would be forced to request military support from either China or the United States or, more likely, from both. Such a development would make Thailand a potential theater for wider conflict.

Farther afield, the *Philippines* present a separate problem. The Marcos regime in Manila appears increasingly unstable, facing opposition from both armed insurgent groups operating in the southern part of the country and from a rising portion of the middle class in the capital and other cities. The collapse of the Marcos regime would inevitably involve the United States in the local situation, if for no other reason than the desirability of protecting the extensive U.S. military facilities in the country. Loss of these facilities would be a serious set-back for the United States, but attempts to preserve the bases against the wishes of a hostile government could lead to a serious conflict.

The final regional actor with a potential role in U.S./Soviet interactions in Southeast Asia is *Taiwan*. Taiwan would not be a primary participant in any Southeast Asian scenario, but will in part determine the character of the relationship between the United States and China. If it is assumed that the United States will maintain its current level of support for and commitment to Taipei, renewed attempts by Beijing to resolve the Taiwan issue could chill U.S./P.R.C. relations, making it much more unlikely that the U.S. would

act militarily to support the P.R.C in any scenario. If, on the other hand, China's leaders continue to perceive a good chance of peaceful accommodation with Taiwan, leading to the eventual reintegration of the island with the mainland, Sino-American relations would benefit. This would be particularly true if the United States were seen as a helpful intermediary in the reconciliation process.

The two fundamental constants defining the *Soviet Union's* policies in Southeast Asia are the desire of Soviet leaders to be recognized as a Far Eastern power and the ongoing Sino-Soviet conflict. The Soviet Union's major assets in the region are its overwhelming military capabilities, particularly the large ground and air forces it maintains on the Chinese border and the very modern naval forces it deploys in the Northwest Pacific. Thus far, Soviet military capabilities in the region have been a benefit primarily to Vietnam. By implicitly backing Vietnamese military operations, Soviet power has underwritten the expansion of Vietnamese, and presumably Soviet, influence into Cambodia and Laos, while severely restricting Chinese coercive or retaliatory options. In turn, Vietnam has provided military facilities at Cam Ranh Bay and Danang for the use of Soviet maritime aircraft and warships, a factor which could be important in the event of a future great power conflict in East, Southeast, or South Asia.

The current Soviet strategic position in Southeast Asia could become a liability as the situation evolves, however. Vietnamese aggressiveness could end up drawing the Soviets into an unplanned and undesired conflict with China or even the United States. Of greater long term importance is the evolution of the Sino-Soviet military balance. If the relative position of the P.R.C. were strengthened significantly, perhaps as a result of successful modernization in China, in contradistinction to continuing stagnation in the Soviet economy, the direct Soviet military threat against China could lose a great deal of its current credibility, while the defense of the Soviet Far East would present an ever increasing drain on Soviet resources.

*American* interests in Southeast Asia are hardly insignificant. Military facilities in the Philippines are very important supports for the United States' ability to project military power into the Middle East, South Asia, and the Pacific. On the Asian mainland, a somewhat vague security commitment to the defense of Thailand remains, and the U.S. is committed to the other ASEAN nations in a broad political sense. Conceivably, the American relationship with China might continue to develop and to assume further security dimensions although, as we have noted, there are probably fairly tight limitations on these possibilities in the mid-term. Further, if the United States were to continue to demonstrate

increased willingness to support anti-communist insurgencies, the situation in Cambodia could receive far greater U.S. attention. All of these factors represent potential sources of a new direct U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia. The legacy of the previous involvement, however, will bear heavily against any new commitments of American military forces in combat in the region.

## **PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

The ongoing conflict in Cambodia provides the most plausible basis for postulating the development of a U.S./Soviet conflict in Southeast Asia. This might occur in two different ways.

### **Direct Extension of the Cambodian Conflict**

The current conflict in Cambodia could easily spill over into Thailand. Two objectives might tempt Vietnam into such a move.

a) The Vietnamese might launch a limited attack into Thailand for a variety of reasons, for example: if they believed themselves to be on the verge of totally eradicating the Cambodian resistance, but were unable to complete this task without destroying the Cambodian sanctuaries inside Thailand. On the other hand, they might stage a limited attack into Thailand to "punish" the Thais for providing refuge to the Cambodians, simply out of frustration with their inability to resolve the situation decisively. In either case, the operation would be aimed directly at Cambodian resistance groups rather than the Thai Army and would be limited in scope and duration.

b) A more far-reaching conflict could result if the purpose of the Vietnamese incursion into Thailand were to bring about changes in Thailand itself. This could range from a simple "demonstration" of the weakness of the Thai armed forces, intended to coerce Thailand into a more accommodating position, to an actual attempt to topple the existing Thai regime and replace it with one friendly to Hanoi.

An attack limited to Cambodian groups located within Thailand would probably not result in large-scale intervention by outside powers, if for no other reason than there probably would not be time. A more far-reaching Vietnamese operation, however, could very well start a process of horizontal escalation. In this case, the first move would have to be made by Thailand, presumably taking the form of a request for military assistance to China, the United States, or (more probably) both. It is significant that in this scenario the United States decision whether to become involved would not depend on Soviet actions.

The scenario would follow alternative pathways at this point, depending upon the U.S. response to the Thai request.

#### **Variant A**

Initial U.S. actions would no doubt include the supply of arms and diplomatic support. If, however, the U.S. also chose to intervene militarily at this early stage, its actions would of necessity be directed at Vietnam, the principal belligerent. Such an intervention could take the form of direct air support of Thai forces, most likely through the use of tactical Air Force units based in Thailand itself, or of direct pressure against Vietnam from naval forces. This last could range from maneuvers off the Vietnamese coast to strikes against the Vietnamese mainland, most probably carried out by carrier-based aircraft.

Direct support of Thai forces would be the least escalatory U.S. response, and perhaps the most effective in stopping the Vietnamese attack into Thailand. The second option, however, might be considered simpler from a logistical and political point of view, since it would not require operations based on foreign soil and would give U.S. forces greater freedom of action.

Any U.S. naval activity off the Vietnamese coast, would offer the first concrete possibility of U.S./Soviet conflict. Soviet naval and tactical air units are located at Cam Ranh Bay and sometimes Danang. Hostile contact with these forces, or with Soviet ships en route to Vietnam, would be a distinct possibility even if the American fleet had not yet engaged in overt hostilities with Vietnam. If such hostilities were taking place, of course, the probability of U.S./Soviet conflict would be greater.

It is hard to forecast in such a situation whether the U.S. would choose to limit its support to Thailand to military actions in that country or attempt, in addition, this second, more belligerent course of action. America's experience in the Vietnam war seems to have led to a profound reluctance to become involved in potentially open-ended ground actions, as suggested by popular and Congressional opposition to potential involvements in the early 1980s in Central America and Lebanon. Moreover, Americans seem to believe that defeat in Vietnam could have been avoided if sufficient military force had been applied during the early stages of the conflict. Both factors would suggest that if the U.S. came to the assistance of Thailand, it would undertake extensive military operations, to include air attacks on military objectives throughout the region, the mining of port facilities, and the interdictions of any effort to resupply Vietnam--including those of the Soviet Union.

Some notice must be taken, however, of the unique significance, in the context of American politics, of renewed hostilities against Vietnam. In some ways this would seem to be the last place in the world for which an American administration could find domestic political support for military action. It may not be inconceivable that the progression of events in this country and abroad could make such a course attractive at some future date. But it seems clear that any U.S. administration in the near- to mid-range future would prefer to avoid becoming involved in such a situation.

#### **Variant B**

A different chain of events would ensue if the P.R.C., rather than the United States, were the principal intervening power in defense of Thailand. In such a case, the Chinese could be expected to send ground reinforcements to Thailand and to put direct pressure on the Vietnamese across their common border and through Laos. If this pressure were sufficient to halt the Vietnamese offensive, the escalatory potential of the situation would be slight. If, however, the Soviets reacted to a Chinese attack on Vietnam by sending logistics and military units to Vietnam itself, and/or by posing a direct threat on the Chinese border, the conflict could escalate quickly.

It is at this point, a direct Soviet threat against China, that the United States could become involved even if it had not previously played any role. If Sino-American relations were such that the Chinese were in a position to ask for, and the Americans willing to give, military support, the situation could quickly escalate horizontally. What form a U.S. intervention might take is open to question, but it could well not be restricted to the Southeast Asian region.

A logical move from a strictly military point of view would be to put American units in a position to support Chinese forces in Manchuria. U.S. air assets already based in Korea could offer immediate support. A more risky U.S. move would be to place air units in China itself. Even in the circumstances envisaged here, it is difficult to conceive of a situation in which U.S. ground forces would be sent to China.

Moves such as these, made in anticipation of a Soviet attack on China, could have a powerful deterrent effect. If the Soviet attack came anyway, or if the moves in question were made in response to an ongoing attack, escalation might be inevitable. For one, the Soviet Union might encourage a North Korean attack against South Korea. Other Soviet options might not be confined to Asia.

Aspects of these two variant scenarios could be combined if the United States and China were to intervene jointly in support of Thailand. Such a joint intervention, whether overtly coordinated or not, would have both positive and negative aspects in terms of the potential for escalation. On the one hand, since greater initial force would be applied against Vietnam, the prospect of defeating the initial attack on Thailand before the conflict had time to escalate would be greater. On the other hand, if the conflict were not stopped, the potential for escalation would increase. In either case, a joint Sino-American intervention might provide the most plausible of the scenarios examined so far. It seems reasonable to believe that the United States would be more likely to intervene if it were not alone, and particularly if it had an Asian ally. Further, once the U.S. involved in a joint operation with China, the probability that it would act directly to support China against the U.S.S.R. would probably increase. The fact that the U.S. intervention could begin at a relatively low level and escalate only gradually would be another factor adding plausibility.

Any escalation, however, could be halted at a number of points in the scenario. The threat of U.S. intervention could be enough to bring Vietnamese aggression in Thailand to an end. Alternatively, if it became clear that the U.S. threats to Vietnam itself were not credible, the American government would have an incentive to try to negotiate its way out of a difficult situation, even at the cost of concessions in Thailand, assuming some sort of a face saving arrangement could be found. Finally, once the conflict reached the stage of direct U.S./Soviet confrontation, it would be entirely possible that the two superpowers could work out an arrangement between themselves, even against the will of their respective allies, which would have as a minimum objective the localization of the conflict. Only if all such efforts for conflict resolution failed, would a direct U.S./Soviet confrontation be reached.

### **SINO-VIETNAMESE CLASH IN CAMBODIA**

A decision by the P.R.C. to pursue a more aggressive policy in support of Cambodian insurgents could result in a more active Chinese role in that country itself, possibly extending to the presence of Chinese troops. Such a step might follow an improvement in cooperation and coordination among the various factions currently fighting the Vietnamese, accompanied by initial military successes on the part of these Cambodian forces. If the situation evolved to the point where a credible anti-Vietnamese Cambodian government could be established inside Cambodia, the Chinese might send forces into the country to help it "liberate" the rest of its territory. Such a move would put China into a

position of direct confrontation with Vietnam, which might then request the aid of its Soviet ally.

It would seem reasonable to believe that the Chinese would not enter such an adventure unless they felt that they had a good chance of succeeding. This would imply either a belief that the Vietnamese position in Cambodia had become so weak that it could be overrun before the Soviets had a chance to act, a belief that Soviet/Vietnamese relations had deteriorated to the point where the U.S.S.R. would not likely to come to Vietnam's aid, or simply a perception in Beijing that the Sino-Soviet military balance had evolved to a point where the Soviets were no longer in a position to threaten China over such a relatively minor affair.

If any of these assessments were correct, there would be no chance of Soviet intervention, and thus no possibility of U.S./ Soviet confrontation. If, however, the Chinese were mistaken in their assessment of likely Soviet behavior, the crisis could escalate.

If they did choose to intervene, Soviet options in this case would be essentially the same as in the first scenario. While Soviet actions might be limited to logistical and military support to Vietnam, it seems more likely, given the extremely provocative steps taken by the Chinese, that the Soviet Union would seek to threaten China directly by putting military pressure on the Sino-Soviet border.

The next move in the situation would depend in part on the state of Sino-American relations. If they had reached a hitherto unprecedented level of closeness and mutual trust, the United States might accept a risk of eventual combat against the Soviet Union by supporting the Chinese initiative. Indeed, the U.S. and the P.R.C. might have held consultations beforehand, with the U.S. promising to take action if the Soviets became involved. Given the nature of the Soviet threat to China in this case, American military cooperation with China would logically concentrate on the Sino-Soviet border. As noted in the previous scenario, such action would most probably be in the form of air support of Chinese forces by U.S. units based either in Korea or in China itself.

It is hard to imagine this scenario unfolding any time in the near future. Sino-American relations would have had to have progressed considerably further than their current stage, which probably implies an evolution of Chinese policy in the direction of further modernization and opening to the West, as well as a continuation of poor relations between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. as well as between the P.R.C. and the U.S.S.R. It also implies a lack of outstanding serious disagreements between the U.S. and China,

which realistically translates into an agreement of some sort concerning the fate of Taiwan. While each of these developments could well occur, they will take place. One would place this scenario relatively late in the century, if it would occur at all.

## **IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

Even less plausible scenarios can be conceived involving a variety of situations. These include direct Sino-Soviet or Sino-Vietnamese conflicts in the South China Sea, renewed border warfare between China and Vietnam, and conflicts between the United States and a hypothetical anti-American successor government in the Philippines.

### **Sino-Vietnamese Conflicts**

China and Vietnam have made conflicting claims to a number of islands in the South China Sea. These have attained considerable importance with the widespread drilling for oil on the continental shelf. The modernization of Chinese naval capabilities might encourage the P.R.C. to press its claims in this region. An increase in Soviet naval activity in the region, presumably as part of an increasingly close relationship with Vietnam, could make conflict more likely.

Troop concentrations along the Sino-Vietnamese border also could cause renewed clashes between the two countries. Both maintain a large military presence on the border, adding to the risk of confrontation; incidents are not unusual.

Either situation is more likely to provide a pretext for conflict, means of expressing more aggressive policies stemming primarily from the situation in Indochina, than to be an actual cause of war between China and Vietnam. Accordingly, the most important factor to be considered in these scenarios is the overall state of relations among Vietnam, China, and the Soviet Union. If China were the initiator of hostilities, the escalatory ladder would be essentially the same as in the second scenario above, but a U.S. intervention would probably be even less likely. It is remotely possible that the United States might intervene if Vietnam were seen as the aggressor and the Soviet Union threatened China, but this too seems unlikely.

### **Conflict in Philippines**

United States military installations in the Philippines are of considerable strategic value, especially in view of the Soviet Union's acquisition of facilities in Vietnam. The political situation in the islands, meanwhile, is growing increasingly unstable. This combination could lead to trouble for the United States if the present government were



replaced by one less friendly to U.S. interests. In order to postulate a situation in which U.S./Soviet conflict became a possibility, however, it would be necessary to assume either that the Soviet Union became involved directly in supporting the insurgents and the U.S. became involved militarily in support of the Marcos regime or an elected successor government, or that a successor government developed close ties to the Soviet Union, demanded that the United States give up its military bases, and that the United States attempted to preserve its position by force.

Neither set of assumptions appears credible. Although the armed insurgent groups currently operating in the Philippines profess anti-American policies and would almost certainly seek to close the U.S. bases were they to achieve power, there has not been any suggestion as yet that they have ties to the Soviet Union. Moreover, the probability of their acquiring power is considered small. If Marcos fell, a more likely successor government would be drawn from less militant elements. Such a government also would be less pro-American than the present regime if for no other reason than the previously close relations between President Marcos and the United States has permanently linked the two in the mind of the opposition, but there would be no particular reason to believe that close ties would exist between this new government and the Soviet Union. (At present, the legitimate Philippine opposition professes neutralist policies and has refused to commit itself as to the American bases once their current leases expire in 1991.) Finally, there is no evidence that the United States would become involved militarily in defense of the Marcos government. Indeed, the thrust of U.S. policy for the past several years has been to distance this country from President Marcos and his supporters.

It is possible, of course, that these factors will change in the future. A more successful insurgent movement which had not yet secured control of the capital, might develop close ties with the USSR. If President Marcos, who is known to be ill, were to die while still in office, a pro-American regime might take power in Manila, presumably with active U.S. support, but lose control of the south and the outer islands. The N.P.A. insurgents might then set up a rival government and mount a serious threat to the U.S. ally. Over time, U.S. military forces might come to the new government's aid.

Even if such unlikely events did occur, however, it is not evident that the Soviet Union would provide overt aid to the insurgent forces or become involved militarily. The U.S. has major military capabilities in this region which the Soviet Union would have difficulty matching. It appears to be a most unlikely spot for a direct confrontation.

## **P.R.C./Taiwan Conflicts**

It is also possible that the Chinese government will eventually lose patience with the situation on Taiwan and take direct military action to gain control of the island. Such a move could conceivably follow a unilateral declaration of independence by Taiwan, or the discovery that the Taiwanese government was developing nuclear weapons, or some radical change in the character of the government in Beijing. While the risks of Sino-American confrontation would be great in such a case, there seems to be little chance that the Soviet Union would be involved in any way. As a source of U.S./Soviet conflict, therefore, this scenario can be discounted.

## **PATHWAYS TO U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT**

The possibility of a U.S./Soviet confrontation arising from a crisis in Southeast Asia appears to be relatively far-fetched. The legacy of the past U.S. involvement in Indochina, the nascent character of Soviet interests in the region, the fragility of U.S.-Chinese relations all make it difficult to imagine the great powers being drawn into military conflict in the region within the next ten to twenty years.

Still, some potential probably exists, due primarily to the contradictory relationships of the two great powers with China and Vietnam. As the most aggressive regional actor, Vietnam is the most likely instigator of the type of severe crisis that could eventually involve the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

The degree of Soviet involvement in such a situation would depend primarily on the then-current state of Soviet/Vietnamese relations, and it can be assumed that the relationship will remain close. China would play a central role in any such scenario as the power most likely to offer immediate opposition to Vietnam. Accordingly, Soviet reactions also would be influenced by the general state of Sino-Soviet relations and the perceived Sino-Soviet military balance.

The United States would play a part in these scenarios, first, in support of Thailand, the nation most likely to be threatened by any new Vietnamese aggression, and, secondly, in support of China, if Beijing faced a Soviet threat or actual attack. This supposes very good Sino-American relations, which in turn implies the further development of close economic and political relations between the two countries and the emergence of nascent security ties trends which would take time to develop significantly. Most pointedly, the full emergence of U.S./China relations close enough to make these scenarios credible would probably require an amicable solution to the Taiwan problem.

The generic pathways to U.S./Soviet conflict in Southeast Asia are summarized in Figure B-1. There are six such pathways, each beginning with a conflict between Vietnam and another local actor. [Readers should note that only pathways which lead to conflict or a serious risk of conflict are included in the chart.]

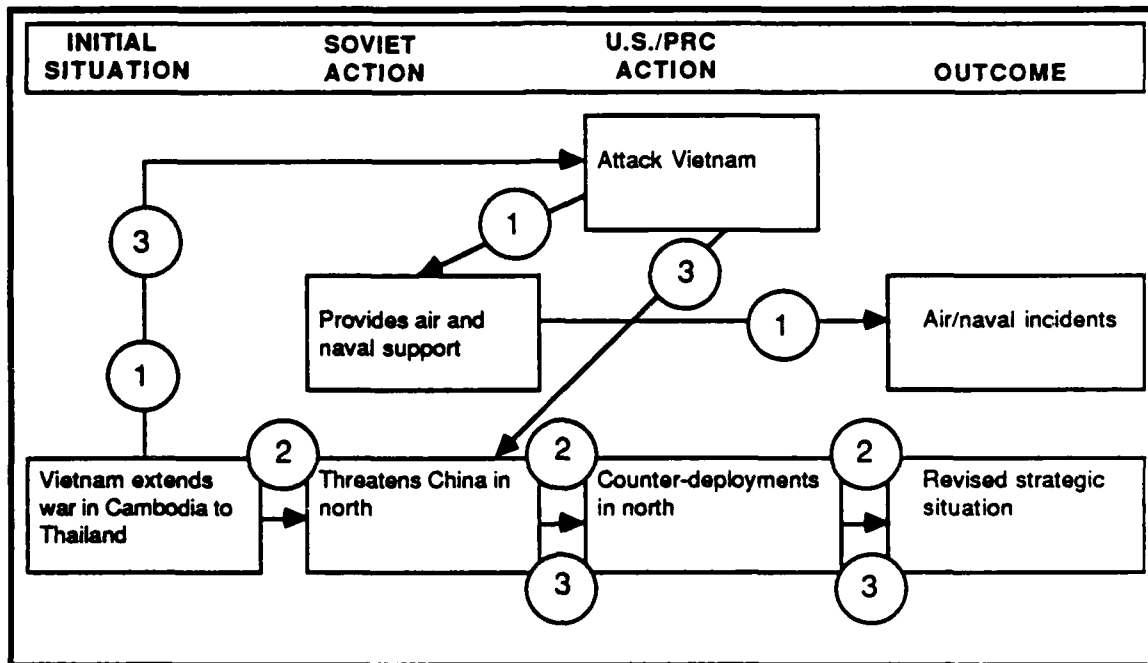


Figure B-1. Pathways to U.S.-Soviet Conflict, Southeast Asia

## LINKS TO OTHER REGIONS

There is a clear link between conflicts in Southeast Asia and the potential for conflict on the Sino-Soviet border, or in Northeast Asia generally. It should be noted that of all the actors involved, only the Soviet Union would have a strong incentive to spread any Southeast Asian conflict to other nearby subregions. It would be in the interest of both China and the United States to seek to ensure that any conflict in Southeast Asia remained localized. The Soviets, however, could take advantage of the political and military leverage provided them by their military forces along the Chinese border, as well as the military capabilities of North Korea, by spreading the conflict to new battle zones.

**Appendix C**

**SOUTH ASIA**

## U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS

### Appendix C. SOUTH ASIA\*

South Asia appears to be a region with some potential to serve as a focal point of military conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R., of course, is already engaged in military operations in the region; the recent apparently more forthcoming posture by Soviet leaders notwithstanding, there is very little diplomatic or military reason to expect their combat operations in Afghanistan to be terminated any time soon. Insurgent operations in Afghanistan are supported primarily from Pakistan, a country which has been allied with the United States, formally or informally, for roughly 30 years. Pakistan suffers severe internal political and social problems intermittently, has an unpromising economic prospect, and its stability as a nation-state has sometimes been questioned due to persistent ethnic unrest. The Pakistani sea coast, moreover, is located adjacent to the entrance of the Persian Gulf--a potentially attractive spot for great-power military facilities. In addition, of course, Pakistan has fought three wars and continues to have differences with India, a much larger and more powerful state which has been the recipient of substantial economic and military aid from, and which is often closely associated with, the Soviet Union. Finally, both India and Pakistan are threshold nuclear nations; both have active nuclear weapon development programs and are likely to be in a position to deploy operational nuclear weapons, if they so choose, in the 1990s. The ingredients for a major east-west confrontation and military conflict, thus, are already in place; the sequences of events which might lead to it are detailed in the scenarios described below.

#### PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS

Scenarios for conflict in South Asia in the near term must of necessity focus on possible consequences of the ongoing Afghan war. Longer term possibilities concentrate

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\* This scenario is based on a discussion at the Institute for Defense Analysis on September 17, 1985. Participants included Barry Blechman, Stanley Heginbotham, Geoffrey Kemp, Maryann Leighton, Marc Smryl, and Thomas Thornton. The specific views expressed in this paper are not necessarily endorsed by each of these individuals.

more on the potential political and diplomatic evolution of Pakistan. India, on the other hand, is considered to be a relatively more stable nation, and is unlikely to be the source of the kind of turmoil that could lead to major great power conflict.

## **1. Extension of the Afghan War**

The proximity of Soviet military operations in Afghanistan to the Pakistani border, as well as the presence within Pakistan of large numbers of Afghan refugees and of the primary supply and training depots for the Afghan insurgents, makes a spill-over of the Afghan War into Pakistan a clear possibility. The initiative in such a move would rest solely with the Soviet Union; and, indeed, there have already been some over-the-border air raids by the "Afghan" air force against Mujaheddin facilities in Pakistan. A number of events can be imagined that might trigger more substantial Soviet moves:

- a) A widely publicized victory by Afghan rebels, such as the capture of an important urban center or the destruction of a large Soviet unit could induce the Soviets to stage ground operations in Pakistan, or to launch major air strikes, in an effort to cut off the supply of equipment to the insurgents, hoping in this way to regain control of the situation in Afghanistan and to coerce the Pakistani government into curtailing the future flow of supplies.
- b) To date, the Soviet Union has been relatively restrained in its actions against the Mujaheddin's facilities and supply lines in Pakistan for a number of reasons. Constraints imposed by the Pakistani government on the quality and quantity of equipment sent to the rebels is no doubt one reason. Soviet relations with the Islamic world, damaged by the invasion of Afghanistan, would be made worse by an extension of the war to Pakistan. The action in Afghanistan also complicates Soviet relations with China; an escalation of the conflict to include operations against Pakistan would no doubt set back long standing Soviet efforts to normalize relations with China. It is hard to know at what point the costs of the continuing war in Afghanistan, as perceived by Soviet leaders, may overwhelm these political considerations, leading to Soviet actions against facilities in Pakistan or against the Pakistani government itself. But either a breakdown of Pakistani limitations on supplies, or a sharp setback in Soviet relations with China or major Islamic countries, for whatever reason, could contribute to such a decision.

The threat that the United States might play a more active role in support of the Mujaheddin may be another factor which helps to deter Soviet escalation of the war in South Asia. Thus, a Soviet perception that the U.S. had lost interest in the region or no longer had the will to prosecute its interest there, or a perception of significant differences of opinion between the United States and

its allies on this question, might also contribute to a greater Soviet willingness to escalate the war. Any development which diminished the potential impact of hostile U.S. reactions, or reduced the probability of effective Western intervention, would tend to erode the disincentives against Soviet escalation.

- c) Finally, the Soviet Union could be encouraged to act more aggressively if it came to believe that Pakistan's internal political situation and/or military power had deteriorated to the point where a relatively minor Soviet action, or even the threat of such action, could be sufficient to persuade the government of Pakistan to abandon its support for the Afghan insurgents.

The method and scope of possible Soviet operations against Pakistan could vary considerably and would likely be determined in large part by the particular motive of the Soviet action. If Soviet operations were intended strictly to disrupt Afghan guerrilla operations within Pakistan, the initial Soviet action might be to launch air strikes against guerrilla targets in northwestern Pakistan. If Soviet motives were primarily political--intended to coerce or even destabilize the Pakistani government--the Soviet move might include ground operations, perhaps by Afghan forces. Such actions also could be relatively limited, directed against Afghan refugee camps and supply depots inside Pakistan, rather than Pakistani Army units or facilities. Even so, the impact of such an attack could be severe, since it would likely drive large numbers of Afghan refugees toward the interior of Pakistan, as well as disrupt Afghan rebel operations. A limited attack of this kind could perhaps best serve as a final Soviet warning to Pakistan that its interests would be best served by definitively abandoning support of the Afghan insurgents.

The Soviets, on the other hand, could choose to intervene in force, securing control of a portion of Pakistani territory and seeking to maintain the position in the face of Pakistani counterattacks. Such an action might follow the adoption of particularly intransigent positions by the Pakistani government which--combined with continued success on the part of the Afghan rebels--were threatening to require far greater Soviet troop commitments to the war.

Pakistan's options in any of these cases would be constrained by the country's limited military capacity relative to the Soviet Union and by the political costs of a more active alliance with the United States. Faced with Soviet air attacks, or the imminent prospect thereof, Pakistan would be likely to request additional air defense equipment from the United States, including front line combat aircraft and sophisticated anti-aircraft missile systems as well as advisors and supplies. Ideally, the weapons would be obtained before Pakistan were actually attacked in the hope that Soviet aggression might be deterred. If an

air war developed despite Pakistan's best efforts, however, a logical next step would be for Pakistan to request the deployment of U.S. manned AWACS warning and control aircraft, perhaps accompanied by fighter aircraft squadrons. (In the 1990s, the deployment of Saudi-manned AWACS would be an alternative.) Although it would likely resist the second part of the request, the U.S. would find it difficult to avoid sending the AWACS, as they previously have been deployed in crisis situations to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Sudan.

In the case of an actual Soviet invasion, Pakistani options would be even more limited. It appears highly unlikely, even in this extremity, that U.S. ground forces or land based tactical aircraft would be deployed to Pakistan. Pakistan's internal problems, its repressive government, its nuclear weapons program, the effect of such a move on U.S. relations with India, the difficulty of supplying such forces logistically; all would argue against such an American intervention. The geographical location of the probable combat zone, Pakistan's northwest border area, would rule out the intervention of U.S. sea power. Carrier-based aircraft could provide some support, but the distances are great and thus their contribution would be small. For all of these reasons, American support would most likely be limited to accelerating the resupply of the Pakistani military and providing intelligence, and command and communications assistance, such as the introduction of AWACS.

The United States also, in such a crisis, would attempt to put political and diplomatic pressure on the Soviet Union, perhaps involving military threats in other parts of the world. (It has already been assumed that U.S./Soviet relations had deteriorated substantially.) U.S. efforts might well be coordinated to a degree with China, and the latter might act as a conduit for some U.S. support. Pakistan also would seek support in the Islamic world, and would likely obtain some, at least on the political and financial level. It is difficult to imagine, however, how any of this could rectify the short term military situation.

Two factors beyond the Soviet/Pakistani relationship, strictly defined, could play an important role in determining both the likelihood and the potential outcome of this scenario:

- a) The role of India. Soviet operations against Pakistan could be simplified if the Indians took an actively hostile stance towards Pakistan. Even if India did not actually participate in the war, the threat of such participation would divert a large proportion of the Pakistani armed forces from the northwest. Indian participation also would make any direct American participation in the conflict more difficult. It is not clear, though, that India would welcome a direct Soviet move against Pakistan--despite the apparent closeness of Indian-Soviet



relations and the historic enmity between India and Pakistan. India probably sees value in the existence of a buffer between it and the Soviet military power now deployed in Afghanistan. Thus, while a possibility, Indian support would probably not be forthcoming.

- b) Conditions in Iran. The evolution of the internal political situation in Iran in a manner that made that country less hostile to the Soviet Union than it is now also would simplify the Soviet task by removing a potential source of support for the Pakistanis, as well as by making any attempts by the Arab states to assist Pakistan more difficult. If, on the other hand, Iran had ended its war with Iraq and had become less hostile and aggressive with regard to other Islamic nations, particularly those on the Gulf, the Soviet operation could be complicated. Moreover, under such circumstances, Iran might become a more active source of logistical support for the Afghan insurgents, thus reducing the value of any Soviet operation in Pakistan and, perhaps, thereby making one less likely.

### **Plausible Outcomes**

The local Soviet/Pakistani military balance leaves no doubt as to the outcome of a direct confrontation between the two countries; the Soviet Union has overwhelming superiority. Further, the logistics of the situation, to say nothing of American and Pakistani politics, would virtually rule out large-scale U.S. military intervention. This would probably hold true even if the conflict resulted in incidents which included American casualties, the downing of a U.S.-manned AWACS, for example. In such a case, the American military response would probably be limited to a specific retaliatory action.

Unless Soviet objectives were limited to disrupting Afghan guerrilla operations, the outcome of the crisis as a whole would be less than clear, however. If Pakistan coalesced politically in the face of the attack, any Soviet attempt to occupy Pakistani territory would likely result in the same sort of warfare against Soviet forces which now takes place in Afghanistan. Both the topography and the ethnic base of the population are similar, and the Pakistani army, reportedly well-trained and disciplined, would not be an insignificant obstacle to a major Soviet military victory. Moreover, the consequences of an outright invasion for Soviet interests elsewhere in the world would be severe, particularly in Europe and the Middle East. Since the gains to the Soviet Union from such an operation in the context of the Afghan War would not seem to justify risks on this scale, it seems probable that the Soviets would limit any military operations in Pakistan to isolated air attacks or temporary ground incursions intended to disrupt guerrilla operations and to induce the Pakistani government to limit, if not halt, its support of insurgent forces.

There is a possibility, however, that even limited Soviet incursions into Pakistan could destabilize the Pakistani government. Such an outcome of a near term Afghan/Pakistani crisis would contribute significantly to the probability of the longer term scenarios described below, which would contain a serious risk of major U.S./Soviet conflict. The near term crisis itself, however, would be likely to lead only to sporadic and isolated incidents between U.S. and Soviet forces, if even that.

## **2. Disintegration of Pakistan**

If the stability of the central government of Pakistan were seriously undermined, either as a result of the preceding scenario or for other reasons, separatist forces in Baluchistan and other provinces would have opportunities to step up their activities and perhaps make significant gains. This could provide an opportunity for the Soviet Union to develop allies within Pakistan, leading eventually to a reorientation of the Pakistani government or to the disintegration of the nation, and perhaps even to the U.S.S.R.'s acquisition of military facilities on the Arabian Sea in a newly independent Baluchistan. The development of such a situation would contain serious risks of U.S./Soviet conflict.

### **Political Background**

So long as the Government of Pakistan maintains the level of cohesion and control exercised at present by President Zia al-Haq and the Pakistani Army, there is little chance that secessionist movements could succeed or even be seriously contemplated. It is known that the Soviet Union provides some support to the Baluchis, and perhaps to other groups in Pakistan, but at present this is done solely for nuisance value. Periodically turning up the level of support provides a way of cautioning and irritating the Zia government, but it is not done with any expectation of success. In order for this scenario to become plausible, therefore, it is necessary to assume that it had been preceded by events that had seriously undermined Pakistan's cohesion.

One such possibility is provided by the scenario discussed above. Limited Soviet military actions in Pakistan related to the Afghan war conceivably could cause the downfall of, or at least substantially weaken, President Zia. Regardless of the complexion of the successor regime, one result of such a development would almost certainly be a general loss of authority by the central government. This loss of power would be compounded if the Pakistani Army had been directly involved in the military action and had suffered a serious defeat. In such an environment, secessionist movements could gain strength

rapidly. Alternatively, the U.S.S.R. might step up support of such movements as part of a two-pronged strategy, overt and covert, to force the closure of Pakistani territory as a base of support for Afghan insurgents.

A renewed outbreak of Indo-Pakistani hostilities could have a similar destabilizing effect, again assuming that the Pakistanis were defeated militarily. Hostilities could be initiated by the Indians for a number of reasons. (It seems totally implausible to imagine that hostilities would be initiated by Pakistan.) (i) If Pakistan provided aid to Indian separatist groups in the Punjab or elsewhere, or if the Indian government came to believe that this was the case, rightly or wrongly; (ii) If New Delhi had reason to believe that the Pakistanis had achieved, or were on the verge of achieving, a major advance in nuclear capabilities, India might launch a preemptive strike against Pakistani nuclear facilities; (iii) A future Indian government faced with internal dissent might opt for an aggressive regional policy as a device to restore its domestic cohesion. (This remote possibility would probably require the achievement of power in New Delhi by a right wing neo-nationalist government.)

#### **Soviet Tactics and Opportunities**

If the Soviet Union had been successful in its pacification of Afghanistan, it would likely have an existing logistical base in that country from which actions could be launched to the south. It would be in a very good position, therefore, to intervene in Pakistan if the opportunity for such a move should occur. Alternatively, as noted above, the Soviets could decide to stimulate problems in Pakistan as a means of ending the stalemate in Afghanistan by combining covert activities involving separatist groups with overt across-the-border raids intended to discredit the Pakistani Army and central government.

As the strength of the Pakistani government continued to decrease, it is reasonable to believe that insurgent forces in Baluchistan might request more substantial Soviet assistance, especially if their ideological tilt were such as to make overt alliance with the Soviet Union palatable politically. (This would seem to exclude the possibility of this scenario resulting from an uprising that had been inspired principally by Iranian-style Islamic fundamentalism; and the fact that many Baluchis live across the Iranian border could greatly complicate the situation.)

Over time, Soviet arms, advisors, and even special forces might be seen with the secessionist forces. At some point, the Baluchis may come to feel powerful enough, and to control a cohesive enough piece of territory, to declare their independence. In support of

such a move, they would seek Soviet diplomatic recognition, economic and technical aid, and perhaps the support of Soviet or allied military units to help defend their new borders.

The U.S. would observe such developments with horror. American presidents have suggested on many occasions, if perhaps ambiguously, that this nation would help to defend the integrity of Pakistan. Although such commitments can be and have at times been conveniently overlooked, as when Bangladesh seceded from Pakistan, the U.S. would have a more specific and practical concern in the present case. U.S. decision makers would fear that because the new Baluchi regime depended so heavily on Soviet support, it would be obliged to grant basing rights to Soviet forces in the newly independent territory, and in particular the use of port facilities and air bases on the Arabian Sea. Such facilities would be of great value to the Soviet Union, allowing it to seriously threaten, if not to dominate the sea lanes leading to the Persian Gulf. Such a Soviet presence, moreover, would likely have a fundamental impact on the politics of the Gulf region and the Middle East.

### U.S. Options

Assuming that the disintegration of Pakistan took place slowly, that there was a substantial period during which there was fighting between secessionist forces (clearly supported by the U.S.S.R.) and government troops, perhaps accompanied by across-the-border raids by Soviet units from Afghanistan, the United States would have a number of plausible military and political options.

As the situation unfolded, the U.S. could step up its assistance to the central government of Pakistan--sending arms, supplies and advisors, providing intelligence and diplomatic support, and so forth. Slowly, this could increase the U.S. perception of a serious stake in the situation, making more credible the deployment and involvement of U.S. combat forces. Such U.S. deployments would not likely precede a direct challenge to Pakistani authority posed by the declaration of an independent Baluchi state and the deployment of Soviet combat forces in support of that declaration.

Assuming that U.S. assistance to the central government would not be sufficient to prevent such an action, what might the U.S. do? If, as seems likely, the principal aim of the U.S. intervention would be to prevent the establishment of a Soviet client state on the Arabian Sea, and thus the possibility of Soviet military facilities adjacent to the Gulf, U.S. sea power would clearly play a critical role. It is conceivable, at least in the short run, that U.S. carrier-based aircraft would be sufficient in support of the forces of Pakistan's central

government to deny victory to secessionist and Soviet forces on or near the Pakistani coast. It is less clear that American forces would be in a position to contest control of the interior, however, unless the U.S. government were willing to intervene with sizable ground contingents. This seems unlikely in the opening phases of the war.

If the war continued, though, both U.S. and Soviet forces might be drawn in more directly and the possibility of direct clashes between their ground forces would rise. How long a Pakistani central government might be able to maintain itself in such a conflict is unclear, as would be the willingness of any Soviet or American government to become embroiled in, or to continue to prosecute, such a war. The stakes would be great, however, and the situation might lend itself to the sort of short-term miscalculations which can lead over the longer term to war by inadvertence.

### **Key External Variables**

The external variables cited in the first scenario, namely the position taken by India and Iran, would be of even greater importance in this case. The kind of operations by U.S. naval forces envisaged in this scenario would be considerably more difficult if either India or Iran were participants in the war against Pakistan; neither contingency would appear to be very likely, however. Indeed, Iran--itself concerned with Baluchi dissidents--could well lend support to the Pakistan central government.

India would be the more important military threat in any case, but the position that it might take in this type of situation is by no means obvious. The comments made previously about India's ambivalence about Soviet attacks on Pakistan would be even more relevant in this situation. The Indians would be particularly concerned about the precedent of Soviet support for dissident ethnic groups, as they have certain potential vulnerabilities in this regard themselves. Nor would the Indians look favorably upon the prospect of the establishment of Soviet military facilities on the Arabian Sea. It may be probable, therefore, that India would adopt a neutral position in this scenario and not interfere with American operations.

### **Plausible Outcomes**

If this scenario were played out as described, its escalatory potential would be substantial. The logical evolution of the situation would lead to direct confrontation between U.S. and Soviet combat forces in a theater considered by both powers to be of major strategic importance--one in which there would be no historical precedents to guide

decisions. It is possible in these conditions that one or both powers would find it desirable to broaden the conflict by escalating horizontally (U.S. strikes against Soviet facilities in Afghanistan, Soviet or Soviet-sponsored attacks on American bases in the Persian Gulf or the Horn of Africa, or on Diego Garcia, a Soviet intervention in Iran if domestic conditions there were appropriate) or vertically (introduction of U.S. ground forces in large numbers-- nuclear threats by one or both sides). In the tense climate which any of these moves would create, it is possible that hostilities between the great powers would also erupt in other volatile areas of the world.

It is also possible that the implicit threat of escalation on the scale suggested here might induce the great powers to end the crisis before such measures were taken. They each would be moving into an uncertain situation; unless one or the other had tremendous confidence in its military capabilities, they would both be likely to seek a way out. Whether such a formula could be found would depend on too many factors to be forecast here.

A third alternative also exists, and in some ways may be the most likely. If the initial U.S. intervention were sufficient to deny the Soviets access to the Pakistani coast and to reassert the authority of the Pakistani central government in the coastal areas of Baluchistan, but did not result in the pacification of the interior, the situation could degenerate into a long term insurgency in which separatist forces remained active in the interior with substantial Soviet assistance (although not combat units). Assuming Soviet control of Afghanistan, such assistance could prove effective at relatively low cost to the U.S.S.R. This would present a difficult problem for both the United States and Pakistan to deal with and would contain the risk of renewed open conflict between the great powers at some point in the future. At the very least, it would provide a continuing source of both local and great power tensions and instabilities.

## **IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

There seems to be very little chance of a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union resulting directly from any renewed fighting between India and Pakistan, that did not result in the disintegration of the latter, regardless of the cause or outcome of such a war. It appears unlikely that the United States would increase its support of Pakistan beyond present levels in such a circumstance, and implausible that the Soviets would find reason to become directly involved in any event. The importance of such a scenario, thus,

rests strictly on its possible long term impact on the stability of Pakistan, and thus as a possible catalyst for the second scenario described above.

## **PATHWAYS TO U.S./SOVIET CONFRONTATION**

Given the political and military difficulties of the projection of significant U.S. forces into the interior and northern border areas of Pakistan, sustained direct conflict between the great powers originating in this region would be plausible only if the area of military operations had been extended to include the Pakistani coast and the Arabian Sea/Persian Gulf maritime region. U.S. and Soviet forces would be unlikely to confront one another, except in isolated incidents, as a result solely of Soviet incursions into northern Pakistan related to the Afghan conflict.

It should be considered, however, that the benefits accruing to the Soviet Union from the establishment of a friendly government in this region that might make available military facilities on the Arabian Sea would be considerable. A major Soviet naval presence outside the entrance to the Persian Gulf would weigh heavily in Soviet relations with both Europe and Japan, to say nothing of Middle Eastern politics. For this reason, it seems logical to believe that the Soviets might seek to acquire such a position if they believed that local conditions, primarily the internal situation in Pakistan, and the prospective state of great power relations, were favorable. Their steps would likely be cautious and hesitant at first. A long term covert program of training and support for separatist elements in Pakistan, combined with isolated and limited forays across the Afghan-Pakistani border, would be far more likely than a major invasion of Pakistan. In such an eventuality, the U.S. involvement in the region would also be gradual. This scenario, thus, is more likely to contribute to a higher level of global U.S./Soviet tension, whether as a result of actual military incidents or of serious diplomatic reverses for one side or the other, than to trigger an immediate and general great power conflict.

The generic pathways to U.S./Soviet confrontation in South Asia are outlined in Figure C-1. Only those paths which lead to direct conflict, or at least to a significant political/diplomatic confrontation, have been included.

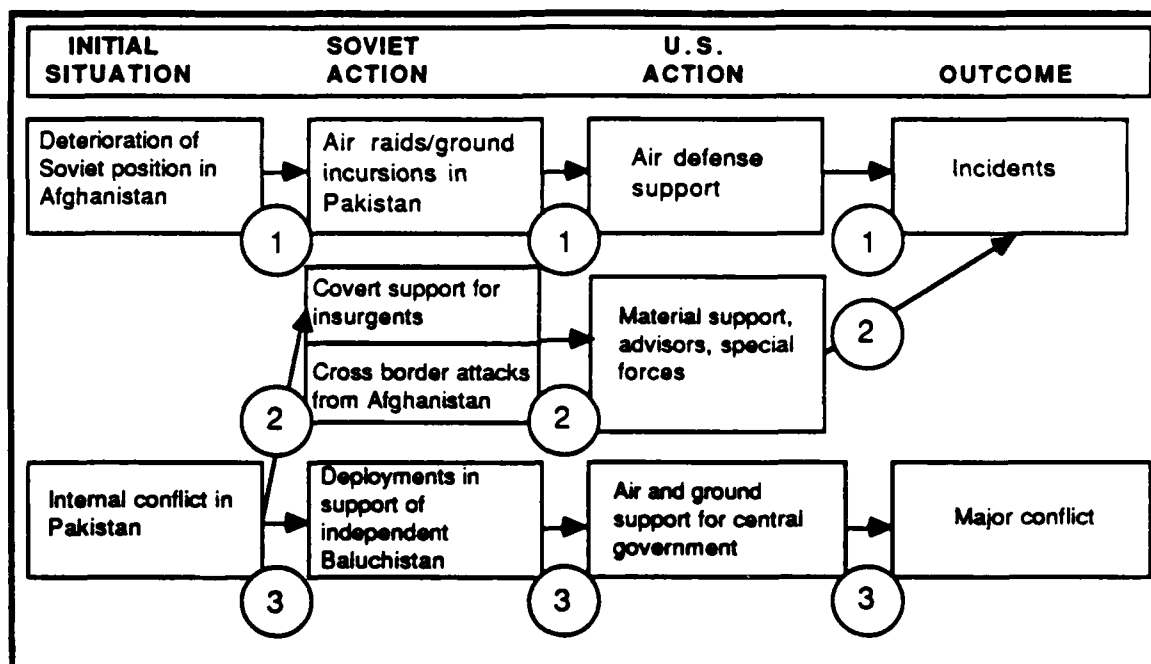


Figure C-1. Pathways to U.S.-Soviet Conflict, South Asia

## LINKS TO OTHER REGIONS

We have already had occasion to note the links between these scenarios and events in Iran and the Persian Gulf. Particularly in the second scenario, the co-location of Baluchis on both sides of the Iranian-Pakistani border would seem to ensure a close relationship between the events postulated here and those in Iran itself. Another possible linkage would exist if the situation in South Asia led to a large-scale American military presence in the area. Current U.S. military planning calls for much of the logistical support for military operations in the Indian Ocean area to be funnelled through bases in northern Africa. The required build-up of U.S. materiel and personnel in that region could trigger local unrest, and possible Soviet moves to interdict links in the American supply line, thereby spreading the conflict to Africa. American bases in the Philippines and possibly elsewhere in East Asia would also be used to support any large-scale operations in South Asia.

There also could be a political link between these events and East Asia. China, concerned already about Soviet aggression in Afghanistan, would look negatively on any extension of that war to Pakistan, a nation with whom it has close ties. One option available to the Chinese to put pressure on the Soviets would be to heat up their long border



with the U.S.S.R. or to put military pressure on Vietnam. Either would be possible, perhaps with the cooperation of the United States.

**Appendix D**

**SOUTHWEST ASIA**

## **U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS**

### **Appendix D. SOUTHWEST ASIA\***

A U.S.-Soviet military conflict in the Gulf region is more likely to originate in possible events in Iran following the demise of the Ayatollah Khomeini than in any other situation. Several scenarios can be imagined in which the U.S. and U.S.S.R. would become progressively involved in support of hostile factions seeking to control Iran and eventually come into conflict with one another. Direct U.S.-Soviet fighting resulting from conflicts among states in the region appears less likely, although one can certainly suggest several scenarios in which the evolution of inter-state conflicts in the region could lead to the establishment of substantial U.S. and Soviet military positions on the Gulf. While direct conflict would be unlikely as an immediate result of such deployments, they could lead to revised political circumstances and eventually to armed conflict between the two great powers.

#### **PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

For analytic ease, we have divided the Gulf scenarios into two sets: Those originating in domestic conflicts in Iran and those whose origins lie in inter-state conflicts.

##### **Conflicts Within Iran**

It is quite possible that the succession procedures established by Khomeini will not work smoothly after he passes from the scene and that a power struggle will ensue. Any such conflict would likely be multidimensional, reflecting religious differences (Iranian clerics differ strongly among themselves on several issues, particularly on the degree to which religious and secular authority should be fused), as well as struggles for power among individual leaders of the revolutionary guard units (Pasdaran) and/or local political organizations (Komitehs) that have been established since the overthrow of the Shah.

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\* This Appendix is based on a discussion at the Institute for Defense Analyses on August 20, 1985. Participants included Barry Blechman, F. Herse, Robbin Laird, William Lynn, Tom McNaughton, Paul Pillar, Gary Sick, B.E. Trainor, Victor Utgoff, and John Wagner. The specific views expressed in this paper are not necessarily endorsed by each of these individuals.

Moreover, the deterioration of central authority that would follow would encourage the re-emergence of demands for autonomy on the part of various ethnic groups, especially the Kurds and Azeris in the northwest and, possibly, the Baluchis in the southeast. The situation would be complicated in that alliances would likely be formed among various individuals and groups, each seeking power for distinct individual or ideological reasons. Some differences among clerics, for example, seem to follow geographic patterns, and there is evidence of nascent alliances between clerical and ethnic (or provincial) leaders. Aspiring military or political leaders might associate themselves with such arrangements in the pursuit of personal power.

Neither the Tudeh Party nor the Mujaheddin, on the left, are expected to be significant actors in such an internal conflict; both have more or less been destroyed as effective organizations by the current regime. Neither, on the right, would the various pro-Shah or other conservative secularists be expected to play a significant role; they too have been discredited as participants in Iranian politics. Nor for that matter should the Iranian armed forces be expected to play a significant independent role. Their leaders have been replaced with individuals loyal to the regime; their younger officers increasingly are those who owe their positions to this regime, and--in any event--the armed forces remain politically gun-shy and non-ideological as compared to the revolutionary militias and other less formal military organizations.

If a situation of internal conflict persisted over a period of years, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. could become involved with opposing factions. Their involvement might initially be restricted to financial assistance, information, and covert advice--as each would strive to avoid antagonizing the majority of Iranians who strongly oppose foreign interference in Iranian affairs. Over time, one might expect authority to crystallize around specific factions or coalitions of factions in different parts of the country. The establishment of separate authorities in different parts of the country might encourage the great powers to choose sides, leading to the gradual development of more overt postures on the part of both, including the presence of substantial numbers of economic, military, and security advisors, military trainers, special forces, and the overt shipment of arms and equipment. Each side might be expected to continue to make available intelligence information, political and diplomatic support, and financial assistance as well.

In contemplating this scenario, it is essential to keep in mind three factors: (a) it is likely to evolve only gradually, over a period of years; (b) events would be driven largely by the Iranian factions and the course of their conflict--the rapid emergence of a single

dominant faction and its accretion of power in Tehran would effectively stifle the evolution of events; and (c) while perceiving opportunity in the situation, the great powers will also be cautious in extending their involvements--each would fear that too visible a foreign presence would only induce a coalition of forces against its client, yet each also would fear that not to act could only serve the interests of the opposing great power.

#### **Initial Combatant Involvement**

If the situation developed as outlined above, one could assume that there would be a period in which each of the great powers prepared for the possibility of conflict in Iran. The U.S.S.R. could be expected to mobilize cat II and III divisions on the northwest border, and possibly to deploy additional divisions on the northeast border of Iran. Depending on their success in pacifying Afghanistan, the U.S.S.R. might also deploy additional tactical and long-range aviation units to bases in that country. The United States could be expected to deploy additional naval forces to the Arabian Sea and, if permitted by the Turkish Government, to have deployed tactical air units to bases in eastern Turkey. U.S. tactical air units--and perhaps even ground combat forces--might also have been deployed to Egypt, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, perhaps temporarily in the guise of "exercises." (These deployments would raise some possibility of inadvertent incidents between U.S. and Soviet units.)

These preliminary steps notwithstanding, the actual deployment of combatant units in-country would be a difficult step for either nation, one which would be taken only in extreme circumstances, as the risks would be great.

Almost certainly, the first move would be the U.S.S.R.'s. Two variants of circumstances in which Soviet divisions might be ordered across the border might be considered:

- a) If a faction previously supported by the U.S.S.R. gained control in Tehran and called for assistance, the U.S.S.R. might intervene in force. Soviet leaders would probably be reluctant to intervene overtly; their experience in Afghanistan in 1978/79 would weigh heavily in this situation. Still, if they believed that--given some breathing room--their client seemed likely to prevail over its Iranian opponents and was capable of consolidating authority in the country, they would be greatly tempted to act. They also would be concerned that if they did not act, opposing factions with U.S. assistance might depose their client. They also would have had to have judged that the risk that the U.S. would oppose their move directly would be slight. Their intervention in this circumstance would likely be a major one, to include the movement of

multiple divisions over the borders and the landing of airborne units to secure Tehran and airfields in central Iran.

- b) If the Soviets had become involved with a Kurdish or Azeri faction in the northwest and a pro-Western faction appeared on the verge of securing Tehran and consolidating authority, the Soviet might seek to protect their limited position by sending troops across the border to defend a new "autonomous" republic in Azerbaijan. Their immediate purpose in this case would be to secure a temporary position from which they might advantageously compete through less overt means for dominance in Iran overall.

The first situation is by far the more difficult for the United States. If the Soviets moved rapidly enough, and if the internal situation appeared to be falling rapidly to the Soviet-backed faction, the U.S. might indeed be dissuaded from intervening in-country, seeking instead to secure permanent military positions in countries along the Gulf and attempt to contain the consequences of this new extension of Soviet influence. If, on the other hand, the Soviet intervention were less than totally successful in its early phases--and if credible opposition with which the U.S. had worked in the past remained viable in parts of the country--one could imagine several types of U.S. counter-interventions.

One possibility would be for the United States to attempt to secure a base of operations for a faction that it had been backing, seeking in this way to retain some leverage over the situation and either to partition the country or to negotiate a mutual withdrawal with the U.S.S.R.. The use of U.S. ground and air forces to demonstrate support for a Baluchi faction in southern Iran would be one possibility, although the sparseness of the population, the forbidding terrain, and the distance of this area from the important parts of Iran would argue against such a move. A more likely scenario could occur if a relatively favorable faction had retained control of the oil-producing areas in the southwest, in which case U.S. forces conceivably might be used to secure an autonomous government in Khuzistan. Much in this latter case would depend on the course of the Iran-Iraq War and the Soviet relationship to the Iraqi Government, however.

A second possibility would envision that the establishment of the Soviet position in central Iran had been less than decisive--perhaps the introduction of Soviet units caused previously competing factions to coalesce in opposition to the Soviet client. In this case, U.S. air power conceivably could be used to interdict and harass Soviet units, and even to provide close support on the battlefield; U.S. combatant support might also take the form of electronic warfare and counterwarfare and the use of special forces. The commitment of

U.S. ground forces in central or northern Iran appears unlikely in these circumstances, however.

In the second situation (use of Soviet forces to secure an "autonomous" Azeri republic), U.S. intervention would almost certainly take the form of air support, and other types of combatant support; again, use of U.S. ground forces would appear unlikely. U.S. tactical squadrons, however, might be deployed to bases in Iran, perhaps necessitating the deployment of some ground units for security purposes. This would be an advantageous situation from the U.S. perspective in that it would be acting in alliance with the apparent central authorities in Iran to expel the Soviet presence. While the Soviets, if the Iranian forces in control of Tehran persisted in attempting to crush the secession, which is the most likely situation, would have antagonized the overwhelming majority of Iranians.

Under the circumstances, then, the most likely initial combat between U.S. and Soviet forces in this scenario would be between U.S. tactical air (or long-range bombers) and Soviet ground forces and air defense units. Skirmishes between U.S. special forces units and Soviet ground forces might also take place, as the U.S. attempted to support its Iranian allies in slowing the Soviet advance. Extensive ground combat between U.S. and Soviet units would be unlikely at this stage of an Iranian scenario. In most cases, the two nations would not both deploy ground forces to Iran; if they did, they would likely be deployed in different parts of the country.

#### **Key External Variables**

In addition to the internal situation in Iran described previously, the likelihood of these scenarios would hinge on a number of external developments, to include:

- a) Domestic developments in the U.S.S.R.: The gradual Soviet involvement in Iran envisioned in this scenario would be more likely if, over the next several years, Mikhail Gorbachev manages to consolidate his political authority, effects a changeover in key personnel and begins to resolve the Soviet Union's internal problems. Weak Soviet regimes, such as those which have governed for most of the past decade, might have difficulty mounting the sort of sustained escalating involvement in Iran that is assumed as a pre-condition for the overt involvement just described.
- b) Soviet perceptions of the United States: A crucial factor would be Soviet assessments of the likelihood that the United States would respond militarily. This would of course depend in part on the U.S.S.R.'s own sense of

confidence, but also would be affected by the policies of the American administration, and particularly its stance toward South Asia and the Middle East. Soviet personal assessments of the American President and his views toward the use of force, and the degree of support he enjoyed in such matters from the U.S. Congress and public, also would be important.

- c) **Developments in Afghanistan:** Soviet assessments might be colored particularly by the course of events in Afghanistan. Relative success in that enterprise would encourage boldness in Iran; continued failure in Afghanistan would pose problems in both direct (demands for Soviet forces, more limited secure base of operations) and psychological terms. Particularly important might be the outcome of Soviet efforts to persuade the Pakistani Government to constrain support for the Afghan rebels. If the Soviets had managed to coerce the Pakistanis into reducing their support--meaning in all probability that the U.S. had been unwilling or unable to offer credible reassurances to Pakistan--the Soviets would be more likely to act boldly in Iran. The threat of support for Afghan rebels originating in Iran might also be important. To the degree that the Soviets perceived the possibility of a new regime in Tehran that could act more effectively against their position in Kabul, they would perceive more reason to intervene in Iran.
- d) **Developments in Turkey:** Crucial to the United States' ability to mount military operations in Iran would be the availability of bases in eastern Turkey. Whether or not such access would be granted in the contingencies described above would be problematical, depending primarily upon internal political developments in Ankara.
- e) **Iran/Iraq War and the Soviet position in Iraq:** The U.S.S.R. would be concerned not to jeopardize its position in Iraq (assuming that it had not previously eroded) by their actions in Iran. If the war had continued, indeed, they might attempt to justify an intervention in Iran as means of finally resolving that conflict.

### **Plausible Outcomes**

The intervention of U.S. and Soviet combatant units in Iran and even the initiation of combat between them need not result in a major war between the great powers. Indeed, the most likely sequences of events would see the containment of the conflict within Iran and the emergence of at least a temporary understanding between the great powers. The occurrence of any of these scenarios, however, and particularly the introduction of U.S. and Soviet combatant units into Iran, would suggest the initiation of a new stage of political and military maneuvering in the Persian Gulf region. Whatever de facto arrangements



emerged following the initial clashes, the possibility of new and more extensive conflicts within the next several years would be great.

- a) Negotiated withdrawal: Conceivably, following the introduction of U.S. and Soviet forces in different parts of Iran, the shock of foreign intervention could lead the various Iranian factions to unite or to form a coalition and pressure both great powers to withdraw. Although unlikely, it is conceivable that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. would accede to these Iranian demands and negotiate a mutual withdrawal, particularly if the risk or reality of combat between U.S. and Soviet units had caused both states to worry about the possibility of escalation. In the event of a withdrawal, of course, both nations would attempt to maintain as large a covert presence and influence with their clients as conditions permitted, and the possibility of a reintroduction of their units, particularly on the Soviet side, if the Iranian coalition failed, would be substantial.
- b) De facto partition: Alternatively, it may not prove possible for effective central authority to emerge in Iran or a faction which did gain the upper hand in Tehran might be clearly allied with one of the great powers. In that event, one would expect the two sides to retain whatever positions they had occupied in Iran and for the country to be partitioned. Such an outcome would be unlikely to be stable for very long, as Iranian nationalism would likely reemerge and inflict substantial costs on the occupiers. The United States' staying power, particularly, would have to be considered suspect.
- c) Soviet defeat: In the situation in which limited Soviet forces had entered northwestern Iran to defend an "autonomous" republic, there would be a relatively substantial possibility that a combination of Iranian ground actions and U.S. air power would make the incursion costly enough to compel a withdrawal. Key, here, would be a Soviet assessment that they had miscalculated and that the United States' use of force against their own units suggested a much greater resolve and risk of escalation than they had previously imagined.
- d) American defeat: The United States might suffer a defeat, particularly if it had committed air power without an adequate support base--or had attempted to move ground units directly into the northern areas. In the first case, for example, if Turkey and/or Gulf states were unwilling to permit combat missions to be flown from their bases, the amount of air power which the U.S. could utilize might be too limited to bring about a successful conclusion of the Iranians' attempts to force a Soviet withdrawal. Heavy U.S. aircraft losses to Soviet air defenses might also contribute to an American decision to accept the political consequences of having failed to dislodge the Soviet intervention. In most scenarios, the U.S. might have the option in the event of a defeat by the

Soviets in the north, of withdrawing temporarily to a base around Abadan in the southwest. Moreover, in the event of an American defeat, as in the case of a Soviet defeat, the defeated power could consider initiating a new crisis in a different region.

- e) Escalatory options: The most likely sequence of escalatory actions would involve strikes by the great powers at air bases supporting their respective operations in Iran. In one case, for example, the Soviets might be tempted to strike at bases in Turkey that were being used to support U.S. combat operations. Such an action conceivably could lead to a major NATO/Warsaw Pact confrontation, particularly if Turkey's support of the American action in Iran were being undertaken in the context of an alliance decision. For its part, the U.S. could be tempted to strike Soviet bases in Afghanistan that were being used to support Soviet air operations, although this would be unlikely to lead to further escalation (unless they preceded the Turkish strikes). A more radical U.S. escalation would imagine strikes against bases within the Soviet Union supporting the air war. Such an action would be virtually inconceivable except in the event that the Soviets had first hit the American bases in Turkey.

Soviet escalatory options also would include attacks on U.S. naval forces or merchant shipping supporting the American intervention. Like an attack on Turkish bases, such an action would appear to be a relatively small risk because it would open such vast potential for further escalation.

### **International Conflicts on the Gulf**

Of the various conflicts among the nations bordering the Persian Gulf, only the continuing Iran-Iraq War appears to have the potential to lead to direct conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Even here, however, the now considerable record of the great powers of managing the potential consequences of this continuing crisis suggests that a U.S.-Soviet war is unlikely to result from it directly. More likely would be two-staged scenarios in which developments in the Iran-Iraq War led to the deployment of U.S. and Soviet military forces into the region, thus creating new political circumstances under which events might eventually lead to direct U.S.-Soviet conflict.

It is difficult to describe the longer-run prospects for U.S.-Soviet conflict resulting from their mutual deployment of combatant forces into the Gulf region. It is quite possible that the two great powers would work out a modus vivendi, as they have in Europe, and never come into conflict. On the other hand, it would be a new and untested situation, taking place in a volatile region. It is not difficult to imagine events--either internal conflict

within a Gulf state or a conflict between two or more local states--that would have a high probability of leading to conflict between the great powers.

#### **Variant (a). Iranian Victory in the Ground War**

Although considered highly unlikely, it is conceivable that Iran could mount a major offensive and break through Iraqi lines on the southern and central fronts and begin to march on Baghdad. Severe limitations on Iranian combat support and logistical capabilities would make such an event unlikely; moreover, if it did occur, the Iranian advance would necessarily be slow. Still, conceivably, the Iraqis might eventually become demoralized and fed up with the war and, faced with new waves of Iranian fanaticism (accompanied perhaps with Iranian chemical weapons?), the Iraqi Army might begin to disintegrate, much in the fashion of the ARVN in the face of the NVA's successes in the Vietnamese Highlands in early 1975

The Soviets would view such developments with alarm. They have a considerable investment and great potential in Iraq under the current government. Moreover, they would fear the consequences of an Iranian victory for their other friends in the region--notably Syria--and, additionally, its implications for the appeal and support of Islamic fundamentalism. They could foresee, for example, Iran turning from its triumph in Iraq to far greater support for the Avian rebels--and even to the export of fundamentalism to the U.S.S.R. itself.

Given these considerations, and assuming that a sympathetic regime remained viable in Baghdad long enough for them to act, the Soviets could deploy forces to Iraq, seeking to shore up the Saddam Hussein regime and to stabilize the front. The Soviets would probably seek to avoid direct contact with Iranian forces. The probability of the use of Soviet air, and even ground, forces to expel Iranian troops from Iraqi territory should not be completely discounted, however. The possibility of the introduction of Soviet units into northwestern Iran as a political counter is even more far-fetched, but again should not be ignored.

If the Soviet action were successful, other states on the Gulf would be concerned regarding the longer-range implications. They would fear that the now victorious Iraq (assuming that Iran now "sued" to settle the war) might reaffirm its previous assertive foreign policies. Iraq has claimed the entirety of Kuwait as its territory, for example, and has had various disputes with Saudi Arabia over the so-called "neutral zone." The

conservative governments on the lower Gulf also would have a more diffuse concern about the long-run implications of this sizable Soviet presence on the Gulf.

Once the initial situation had been stabilized, therefore, the relatively pro-Western Gulf states would seek to persuade Iraq to send the Soviet forces home, and they would have considerable leverage in such efforts. If their efforts failed, however, they might seek an offsetting American presence, probably in the form of air units in Egypt, Oman, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. There also would be the possibility of the stationing of some American ground combat forces--or at least the pre-positioning of their heavy equipment--in some of these states. (Political considerations might also lead to the coincident deployment of some American forces or equipment in Israel.) Such deployments, of course, would greatly enhance the readiness of U.S. forces for various Gulf contingencies. Whether or not the U.S. would be prepared to accede to such a request, however, would depend in part on intervening developments in American politics, and probably also on developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict prior to the Gulf contingency.

It is not difficult to envision the transformation of these initially temporary deployments into an apparently permanent U.S. and Soviet military presence in the Persian Gulf region, and eventually into new opportunities for U.S.-Soviet military conflict.

#### **Variant (b). Extension of the Iran-Iraq Air War**

The Iraqis have recently shown a willingness to make more serious efforts to destroy Iran's ability to export oil. Without minimizing the technical difficulty of this objective, it is conceivable that once equipped with advanced armaments in large numbers and suitably motivated, they might be successful in such an enterprise. Iran's reaction would be uncertain but could, as the Iranians themselves have suggested, encompass serious efforts to shut-down all oil exports from the Gulf. These efforts might not be limited to air strikes against tankers or even against the loading facilities of Arab nations on the Gulf, which are unlikely to be very successful given the vast current deficiencies of the Iranian Air Force, but could also include the use of commandos to sabotage oil facilities, attacks by small boats on shipping in the Gulf, and even the mining of the Straits of Hormuz.

A major Iranian offensive against shipping and oil exports from the Gulf might well overwhelm the defensive capabilities of Saudi Arabia and its smaller allies, and the U.S. could be called upon to honor its commitment to maintain free access to the Gulf. The U.S. might try initially to limit its involvement to the provision of intelligence and other

forms of combat support to the Saudis, but eventually might perceive little choice but to utilize its own armed forces against Iran. Such moves might be limited to air strikes against relevant Iranian facilities in the first instance. If the Iranians persisted in their efforts, however, the U.S. could be tempted to use ground forces to seize those portions of southern Iran from whence attacks had originated.

Soviet reactions to such a move would be hard to predict. The events leading to the U.S. attack would no doubt be accompanied by Soviet preparations for military action in the region--upgrading of divisions on the Iranian border, redeployments of tactical air units, and the like--which would contribute to tensions and probably increase the probability of a Soviet countermove. Still, if they were convinced that the U.S. move was a temporary one and intended solely to resecure egress to the Gulf, a reading which would depend on the precise character of events leading to the action and on U.S. diplomatic blandishments at the time, the Soviets might not act militarily. After all, neither their allies the Iraqis nor the Soviets themselves would have any sympathies for the Iranians in this situation.

On the other hand, such a sequence of events could lead easily to the movement of Soviet forces into the region. For one thing, the Soviets might take advantage of such a U.S. action to move their own forces into northwestern Iran. They would be tempted to do this if, (i) the U.S. move led to instabilities within Iran and the sort of internal conflicts described in the first section of this paper; or (ii) they read the U.S. action as the first step toward the installation of a pro-Western government in Tehran; or (iii) they had had difficulties with the Iranian Government, say over Iranian support for the Afghan rebels, and saw the situation as an opportunity to depose the authorities in Tehran. For that matter, if the Government of Iran appeared to have been sufficiently destabilized by the U.S. action, and if the Soviets had already secured a position with a faction in a position to replace the regime in Tehran, the U.S.S.R. might seize the opportunity provided by the American action to occupy the northern third of the country and install a more friendly regime. This situation would then resemble one of the scenarios resulting from conflict within Iran, including a risk of immediate conflict between U.S. and Soviet units.

Alternatively, the Soviets might respond to a U.S. move into southern Iran by installing their own forces in Iraq. This might happen if they assessed the regime in Tehran as relatively stable and therefore likely to respond with force if they entered Iranian territory and yet believed it necessary to lodge a political counter to the American action. The Iraqis' willingness to go along with such a Soviet move would depend largely on the condition of

their war with Iran and relative dependence on Soviet military equipment and other forms of support. This scenario looks more like variant (a) in that the risk of immediate conflict between U.S. and Soviet units would likely be small.

## IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS

There are also a number of scenarios, frequently discussed, which in the opinion of the experts assembled for this study were either implausible or unlikely to lead to anything but isolated incidents. This judgment, which would extend roughly to the end of the century, would change in the event of the prior deployment of Soviet, or Soviet and U.S. forces in the Gulf, as previously discussed.

1. *Soviet attacks on an Iran that remained united behind a strong central government.*--Scenarios imagining aggressive Soviet actions to (e.g., complete a long-range plan to gain control of the Gulf or to create a buffer on their southern border), were judged implausible by the experts--so long as tumultuous situations did not develop in Iran. The primary factor inhibiting Soviet aggressiveness would be their recognition that to invade Iran would be to unite the country against them and to trigger a difficult guerrilla war such as they face in Afghanistan. Even in the event of Iranian provocations, such as more ambitious efforts to support the Afghan rebels, the scenarios seem unlikely to lead to anything but limited border incidents and, in any event, would be most unlikely to involve the United States.
2. *Left-wing coups in the lower Gulf states.*--Political and demographic conditions in these nations would favor a pro-Iranian, anti-Communist coup--if anything--in these nations. Moreover, the U.S.S.R. would find the logistics of such interventions difficult, the risk of a U.S. counter-response high, and the likely adverse political consequences in other nations, particularly in Europe, severe. Following the establishment of a Soviet presence in the region, however, such as in the event of an intervention in the Iran-Iraq War, an intervention in the lower gulf would become far more likely.

## PATHWAYS TO U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT

Based on this analysis, we can identify eight potential generic routes to combat between U.S. and Soviet forces in the near-, mid-, and long-term. Four stem from the internal situation in Iran and four from the Iran-Iraq War. These generic sequences of events are summarized in Figure D-1. [Readers should note that only pathways which lead to actual combat or to a risk of combat are included on the chart.]

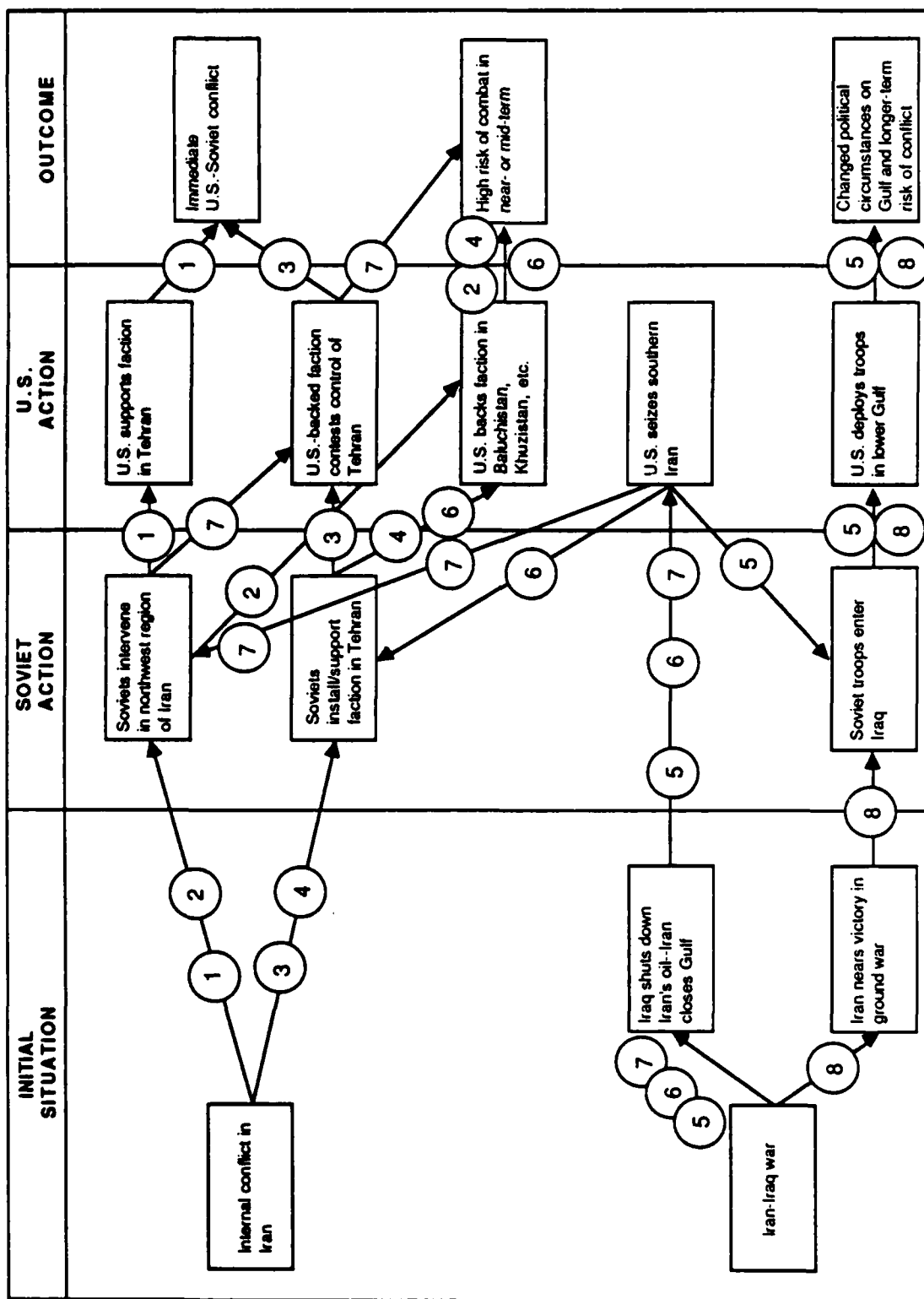


Figure D-1. Pathways to U.S.-Soviet Conflict, Southwest Asia

## LINKS TO OTHER REGIONS

Iran and the Persian Gulf play pivotal roles in contemporary geo-political considerations. There would be both military and political links between a conflict in this region and other regions in both Europe and Asia.

Militarily, the United States would require access to a number of facilities in Africa and in the Indian Ocean and East Asia to support any substantial military deployment in the Gulf region. The Soviet Union, of course, would have direct access to Iran from bases on its own territory; it might wish to make use of bases in Afghanistan for some air operations, however, particularly with regard to contingencies on the lower Gulf.

Europe could be linked to an Iranian conflict both militarily and politically. The U.S. might also wish to draw forces or stocks from its NATO-committed units in Europe. More importantly, the use of bases in Eastern Turkey would greatly augment the amount of air power which the United States could bring to bear in Iran. Turkey has stated publicly that it would permit the use of these facilities only in the context of an alliance decision to intervene in the Persian Gulf region.

Events in Iran also would have political implications with regard to the positions of the great powers elsewhere in the Middle East and in South Asia. Each would be greatly concerned about the inferences that various nations might draw as a result of their behavior in any Iranian crisis.



**Appendix E**

**THE MIDDLE EAST**

## U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS

### Appendix E. THE MIDDLE EAST\*

The Middle East has been the location of the only serious U.S.-Soviet confrontations since the early 1960s. These experiences have resulted in certain expectations on the part of both local actors and the great powers about each other's likely behavior in the event of a new crisis. As a result, any new confrontation in the Middle East would likely play out relatively quickly. Each great power has acted in certain routine ways in the past. They each might be expected to attempt to pursue these same routines in any future crisis. Internal political and bureaucratic hindrances are less difficult when familiar patterns are being followed. Moreover, in the first instance, each side would anticipate that the other would act in familiar ways and condition its own behavior accordingly. Local actors also would have clear expectations about how the great powers would behave--what they would and would not do--and might shade their own behavior accordingly.

In most cases, this suggests that the possible consequences of a crisis in the region might be easier to contain. Past successful containments could provide an implicit model for decision makers, permitting the key actors to feel less uncertain about the possible outcomes of events (and about the other actors' anticipations of likely outcomes), thereby permitting them to behave with greater confidence and to avoid rash or desperate actions. On the other hand, if in a future crisis, one of the major actors did behave substantially differently than in previous incidents, the situation could become very dangerous very quickly. The breaking of established patterns of behavior could introduce such wide uncertainties into each side's anticipation of events as to induce serious miscalculations and imprudent judgments.

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\* This paper is based on a discussion at the Institute for Defense Analyses on September 11, 1985. Participants included Barry Blechman, Geoffrey Kemp, Harry Klein, Robbin Laird, William Quandt, and Victor Utgoff. The specific views expressed in this paper are not necessarily endorsed by each of these individuals.

## POLITICAL/MILITARY BACKGROUND

The manner in which a new Arab-Israeli conflict might emerge in the coming years, and thus the possibilities for great power intervention, will depend crucially on a number of developments concerning the politics of the region and the relationships of local actors with the great powers. The key assumptions which led to the scenarios described in this paper are the following:

- **Trends in the Local Military Balance.** The Syrian armed forces have made considerable progress in improving the quality and quantity of their equipment since the Lebanon War of 1982. In that conflict, the Syrian air force and air defense forces suffered an overwhelming defeat, although Syrian ground forces gave a good account of themselves. Improvements in the Syrian forces are due largely to the supply of more advanced Soviet equipment (financed by Saudi Arabia) and the more intensive role of Soviet personnel throughout the Syrian military system. Although Israel also continues to improve its military capabilities, the trends are such that by the early 1990s, Syria should be in a position to be able to consider initiating a military attack on Israel for limited objectives.
- **Intra-Arab Politics.** The Arab world is assumed to remain more or less as it is configured at present--divided, unable to resolve its internal contradictions either within or between nations, for the most part Western-oriented, if for no other reasons than economic realities. (A very different future is quite plausible for the Arab Middle East; it does not require too fertile an imagination to postulate the region's suffering severe economic privations and falling increasingly into the hands of radicals. The continued and projected future weakness of the oil market, particularly, while having clear economic benefits for the West and reducing the possibility of oil production being used as a political weapon, also increases the prospects for radical change in the Arab world by greatly aggravating the economic situations of all nations--directly or indirectly. The consequences of more radical changes in the Middle East are spelled out in the additional chapters devoted to alternative strategic environments.)

The specific assumptions utilized in this case included the following:

- Libya*, under the rule of Qadaffi, remains dependent on the U.S.S.R. for military equipment and relatively isolated;
- Egypt*, governed by Mubarak or another moderate, remains generally Western in orientation and in uneasy peace with Israel, but threatened internally by radical elements;

- Jordan*, governed by a pro-Western Hashemite regime, continues in an awkward condition of non-belligerency, but not in a formal peace arrangement with Israel;
  - Syria*, governed by Assad or a like-minded successor, continues to depend heavily on Soviet and Saudi support, makes progress economically and militarily, and places increasing importance on achieving a leadership role in the Arab world;
  - Lebanon* remains torn by internal conflicts, essentially a non-actor;
  - Palestine* remains a non-state; the Palestinians can prevent resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and cause specific incidents, but are unable to dominate events or move nations;
  - Iraq*, vaguely oriented toward the U.S.S.R. and dependent upon Soviet military assistance, continues to see itself in competition with Syria, particularly if the war with Iran continues; and
  - Saudi Arabia*, relatively stable and pro-Western, seeks largely to avoid difficulties that could compromise its position.
- **Israeli Politics.** Current trends in Israeli attitudes and politics suggest that unless the incumbent, relatively moderate, government of Shimon Peres scores unexpected successes in either improving the Israeli economy or reaching a formal peace settlement, it is likely to be replaced later in the decade by an even more tough-minded and nationalistic government led by someone like General Sharon. Such a government would totally reject the possibility of accommodation with the Arab world, although perhaps not publicly, depending for Israel's security strictly on military power and aggressive policies intended to keep threatening Arab governments off balance and unstable. A particularly relevant aspect of such a policy would be a desire to overthrow the Hashemite Regime in Amman, replacing it with a Palestinian-dominated government that would absorb the Arabs now living on the Israeli controlled West Bank. Depending upon how outspoken and aggressive such a government might be, it could contribute substantially to the problems faced by relatively moderate, pro-Western Arab governments.

## PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS

In the regional context defined by these assumptions, there are four plausible pathways that conceivably could lead to U.S.-Soviet conflict; each stems from a war between Israel and Syria sometime in the 1990s.

In each scenario, the strategic situation that leads to war is initiated by Syria with two objectives in mind. First, Syria hopes to regain the Golan Heights, the strategic highlands overlooking the Galilee which Israel occupied during the 1967 War and has now annexed. Second, President Hafez Assad (or his successor) hopes through a relatively limited military action to be recognized as the leader of the Arab world, thus gaining the leverage necessary to resolve the Palestinian question, to settle ancient rivalries, and generally to dominate events in the region.

The Syrians' objectives in the war are to inflict large numbers of casualties and material losses on Israel in the opening hours of the conflict, to breach Israeli defense positions and seize substantial portions of the Golan Heights during the first two or three days of fighting--while Israel would still be mobilizing, and then to hold the regained territory while the great powers compelled the belligerents to negotiate a cease-fire.

Any Syrian attack likely would begin with massive aircraft and missile raids on Israeli airfields and key logistical facilities. Substantial attrition of the Israeli Air Force would be key to any prospect of a Syrian victory. The use of chemical weapons in this initial onslaught should not be ruled out; indeed, some experts think that the use of chemical weapons would be almost certain. Although cities and civilian targets per se would probably not be targeted in the initial Syrian air raids, the location of critical military targets near population centers virtually would ensure large numbers of civilian casualties.

Syrian armored and heliborne units would cross into the Golan on the heels of the air attacks and seek to destroy the Israeli formations and fortifications that had been pre-emplaced there. These units would be accompanied by massive air defense forces. If Israel had not detected (or not acted in response to) Syrian preparations for attack, initial Syrian successes might be expected. The key to the outcome of the battle would lie in how quickly Israel were able to mobilize its ground forces and move them into position, as well as in its ability to gain control of the skies over the battlefield.

Even if Syria were enormously successful initially, its forces would be unlikely to cross Israel's pre-1967 boundaries. They more likely would stop at the border and seek a negotiated settlement to achieve the two objectives noted at the outset. A Syrian failure to halt at the pre-1967 border--as in response to overwhelming early successes and the hubris that might accompany them--could have very severe consequences, as will be discussed in the context of scenario three below.

In undertaking the attack, Syria would not necessarily count on the active assistance of any other Arab state. Assuming that politics in the Arab world had proceeded as described previously, Jordan might send military units to participate in the war on the Golan, but would not be expected to open a second front. Iraq might also send units to the Golan, particularly if the Syrians did well in the opening phases of the offensive and the war with Iran had been concluded. Egypt could be expected to mobilize its Army and perhaps threaten to intervene, and even this limited step would have the effect of forcing Israel to maintain substantial forces in the southern part of the country. Deviations from the assumptions about Arab politics would tend to strengthen the Syrian position.

Syria would not need Soviet permission to mount such an attack, although the latter would likely be aware of the plan. Soviet advisors would not be expected to accompany Syrian units into the Golan during the war's initial phases, but would be expected to remain in place in Syrian territory. In deciding to initiate the war, the Syrian leadership would have had to have judged that internal and external Soviet politics would necessitate the U.S.S.R. to (a) resupply Syria expeditiously and massively during the war, and (b) guarantee a minimal degree of Syrian security--e.g., act to prevent the occupation of Damascus. To the degree that the Soviets might have previously lost influence in Iraq, perhaps in the aftermath of a settlement of the Iran-Iraq War, and had not regained influence in Cairo, such assumptions could be made more comfortably.

Israel's initial objectives would be to (a) regain control of the air through attacks on airfields and the destruction of Syrian air defense assets, (b) mobilize ground forces, and (c) hold onto as much territory on the Golan as possible and, particularly, to prevent Syria from being in a position to cross the pre-1967 border. Once these objectives were achieved, Israel would likely seek to regain full control of the Heights, and would be unlikely to confine such efforts to a war of attrition on the Golan itself. Rather, Israel could be expected to mount a massive air attack on military and logistical targets throughout Syria, and possibly against highly valued economic targets as well. Such attacks could be expected to inflict substantial casualties to Soviet nationals.

Moreover, Israel should be expected to mount ground operations against Syria through routes that skirted the Golan. An attack through southern Lebanon might not be likely, as Israel would be concerned about the vulnerability of its logistical lines to guerrilla attacks by Shi'ite organizations and because such a tactic would be the familiar and therefore expected one. A more likely Israeli attack option might be through northern Jordan, which would have the added benefit--in a Sharon government's eyes--of helping to

destabilize Hashemite rule on the East Bank. Israel's basic objective, though, would be to cut off Syrian forces on the Golan and by threatening to occupy Damascus itself, to compel a favorable settlement of the war.

The key element in scenarios postulating that these events might lead to U.S.-Soviet military conflict, is the relative degree of success achieved by Syria in the early phases of the war. Four possibilities come to mind:

1. Syria initiates the war and scores early successes, but Israel gains the upper hand relatively quickly.

In the first scenario, Syria would initiate the conflict as suggested above, carrying out strikes on Israeli airfields and other military facilities and penetrating Israeli lines on the Golan. Let us assume, however, that Israel is able to mobilize rapidly, that the initial Syrian attacks are not sufficient to ensure continued air superiority, and that Israel quickly gains domination of the air over the battlefield and the region generally and initiates ground attacks into Syria proper as previously described. Israeli objectives in such a situation would likely to be quite far reaching. The Israelis would seek to inflict maximum damage to the Syrian armed forces and Syria's economy, both in retaliation for the initial Syrian attacks and to prevent Syria from recovering rapidly from the war and mounting new threats to Israel. These attacks could be expected to range throughout Syria and might, to a degree, be targeted deliberately against facilities in which Soviet advisors would be serving. The Israelis might also seek to occupy Syrian territory in sufficient depth to compel a favorable settlement and to discredit the Syrian government that had initiated the war.

Israel would be in a strong political position in this scenario, as it clearly would be the victim of aggression and would command considerable sympathy from the United States and perhaps also from European governments. It could expect to receive supplies from the U.S. rapidly and in large volume. The exact extent of Israeli objectives are hard to foresee. If the initial Syrian attacks had been costly--and particularly if they had seemed to be aimed deliberately at civilian targets (a judgment which may or may not have been correct)--Israeli aims could be quite ambitious, to include the replacement of the Syrian government, as well as the Hashemite regime in Jordan, and perhaps also, while they were at it, the destruction of Shi'ite, Palestinian, and other radical facilities and forces in southern Lebanon. In short, depending upon how well it fared in the early stages of the war and the degree of sympathy and support forthcoming from the United States, Israel might seek to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the Syrian blunder to rewrite the politics on its northern and eastern borders.

As the tide of war turned against Syria, the latter could be expected to appeal to the U.S.S.R. for help. And, as Syria would be the Soviet Union's main--perhaps sole--ally in the region, the latter would have considerable incentive to prevent Syria's overwhelming defeat. This incentive would be increased to the degree that Israeli attacks were causing Soviet casualties and further discrediting of the worthiness of Soviet equipment and support.

Initially, the U.S.S.R. might step up resupply efforts, reinforce its Mediterranean squadron, alert airborne units, establish appropriate communications networks, issue public and private warnings to Israel, and seek through private channels to induce the U.S. to restrain Israeli ambitions. Indeed, given past experiences in the region, such actions could be expected even before the tide of battle turned decisively against Syria.

If the war continued, Soviet actions could become far more threatening, however. A likely early step would be the movement to Syria and participation in the war of organic Soviet air defense units--interceptor squadrons and/or missile units with appropriate command and control facilities. Similar Soviet forces participated in defense of the Nile Delta during the so-called Canal War between Israel and Egypt in 1969/70. The movement of substantial Soviet forces or supplies to Syria would require overflights of Turkey and/or Iran, thus linking the Middle East to potential scenarios in both Southern Europe and Southwest Asia. (Permission for overflights of military aircraft to Syria were given by both nations during the 1973 War and previous crises.)

Additional measures would be intended primarily to coerce the United States into causing Israel to terminate the war. How far the Soviets might go is hard to say, although much would depend upon the course of international politics between the present and the contingency, internal Soviet politics, Soviet assessments of the American leadership, and the specific actual circumstances of the situation on the ground. The Soviet Union's options would include those listed below. (In reality, Soviet moves would probably include several types of measures. Moreover, the situation might be unfolding so rapidly that the precise extent of their initiatives would probably not be clear for some time.)

- a. Movement of Soviet airborne units into Syria, probably not directly into the battle zone, with the intention of compelling the Israelis to cease their advance before coming into direct ground combat with the U.S.S.R.;
- b. Movement of Soviet tactical air units into Syria and their use to attack Israeli forces on Syrian territory. This would represent only a slight escalation from the use of Soviet air defense forces, as it would continue to avoid an extension of the Soviet combat involvement into Israel itself.



- c. Threatened or actual air attacks on Israeli targets, probably airfields, with Backfires or other intermediate-range aircraft. If actually carried out, such attacks initially would probably be intended to demonstrate how far Soviet decision makers were prepared to go to stop the Israeli advance, rather than to achieve real military objectives. The threat, and Soviet military capabilities, might be strengthened by the movement of Backfires to airfields in Iraq and/or Libya, depending on circumstances. Deployment in Libya also would pose an implicit threat to the U.S. Sixth Fleet.
- d. Nuclear threats against Israel might be added to any of the previous actions--or even turned to as the initial means of compelling a termination of the fighting. The U.S.S.R. is said to have hinted at such threats to President Johnson during the 1967 War, when it appeared that Israel might intend to advance on Damascus, and Soviet behavior during the 1973 crisis also included elements which may have been intended to signal the possibility of an eventual nuclear confrontation. The previously mentioned Backfire deployments--or the movement of tactical-range missiles into Syria or neighboring states--could be accompanied by actions which would raise similar warnings. In either case, it would be relatively easy for the U.S.S.R. to suggest tacitly that such units might be equipped with nuclear warheads (or to in fact so equip them) and to hint at such possibilities in diplomatic contacts with the U.S.
- e. Perhaps the most risky action for the U.S.S.R. would be to establish a blockade or quarantine of Israel. The Soviet fleet could be deployed in positions as to prevent the movement of seaborne or airborne supplies to the Middle East. Such an action would challenge the U.S. far more directly than any of the previous possibilities, however, and thus would probably not be one of the initial actions taken to compel the end of the war.

If the war were not halted relatively quickly, the risk of U.S.-Soviet military conflict would begin to rise rapidly; the possibilities for escalation within the theater would be numerous, depending on the precise nature of the Soviet moves and the course of the conflict on the ground. If Soviet fighter units were involved in the air war, there would be a danger that U.S. aircraft carrying supplies to Israel might be shot down inadvertently (or as a warning). The U.S. might respond to such an action by attacking Soviet units that had been deployed to the region. If Backfires had been moved to Libya, for example, they would likely be particularly vulnerable, as the U.S. would feel somewhat greater freedom to undertake attacks on facilities in Libya than against those in other states with which the U.S. might hope to preserve reasonably correct relations.

The possibility of inadvertent incidents between U.S. and Soviet aircraft aside, the United States would be unlikely to participate directly in a war in the Middle East that Israel was winning unless the U.S.S.R. began to attack targets in Israel itself. In that event, the U.S. might be likely to join the air war, using Sixth Fleet assets to attack Soviet forces in Syria and other Middle Eastern nations. In general, for political reasons, once the Soviet Union initiated offensive actions against Israel itself, the U.S. would likely seek to maintain a sort of symmetry in the two powers' roles, matching the degree of Soviet involvement in rough terms. If the Soviet Union declared a blockade or quarantine of Israel, the U.S. would almost certainly challenge the Soviet squadron, and this could easily result in a major naval engagement in the Mediterranean. If Soviet ground forces were deployed in Syria, the U.S. might deploy its own forces in Israel and, if the war continued, there would be some danger of a ground battle between them.

In short, if the battle turned against Syria and Israel refused to limit its objectives, the Soviets could perceive a sufficient enough stake in avoiding the total defeat of its client to become directly engaged in the war against Israel. Any such action would almost certainly lead to a more extensive and more direct U.S. role in the situation with an inevitable increase in the possibility of conflict between U.S. and Soviet military units. The precise degree of risk and the character of such interactions would depend primarily on the character of the initial Soviet actions.

2. Syria prepares for an attack as above, but Israel detects the preparations and attacks preemptively.

It is accepted wisdom in Israel that the government erred in not initiating the 1973 War upon detection of the Egyptian preparations for the attack across the Suez Canal. Any Israeli Government, but especially one of the sort projected for the next decade, would almost certainly act aggressively to disrupt Syrian preparations for an attack on the Golan. Such a government would consider the potential loss of sympathy and political position to be a small price to pay for the tactical military advantages of preemption.

The initial Israeli objectives would be to destroy the Syrian air force, air defense forces, and the ground units being assembled for the offensive on the Golan. If it were successful in this early effort, however, the government might decide to continue with the war, attempting to destroy the Syrian armed forces altogether and, perhaps, to force replacement of the Assad government. Such actions could lead directly to the scenario described above, featuring various types of Soviet interventions and U.S. counterresponses.

The situation would differ primarily in Israel's weaker position relative to the United States. Given that Israel would not have suffered substantial

casualties in the opening phases of the war, as well as the ambiguity which might cloak the need for, and legitimacy of, Israel's preemption, the U.S. would likely feel capable of acting more strongly to compel Israel to terminate the conflict relatively quickly. As such, the risks of U.S.-Soviet confrontation in this situation would likely be less severe--although still significant.

3. Syria initiates the war, seizes the Golan Heights, and appears to be holding successfully.

Syria probably would be able to regain and hold a large portion of the Golan only if its initial air offensive had been extremely successful, which probably implies that it had inflicted a great number of Israeli casualties. This possibility, combined with the strategic significance of the Golan, would suggest that the Israeli government would be reluctant to accept a cease-fire so long as Syria remained in control of the Heights. There would also be the possibility that other Arab governments, emboldened by the Syrian success, might join in the war, thus complicating the political situation, possibly opening additional fronts, and making any effort to bring about a cease-fire far more difficult.

In such a difficult situation, Israel's objective probably would be to compel a settlement that mandated a demilitarized Golan. In support of such a goal, its options might include the following. (We are assuming that unilateral military options, such as an attack through Northern Jordan, would not be viable because of Syria's relative success in the opening phases of the war and continued strong position in the air.)

- a. Request air support from the U.S. in a joint effort to retake the Heights. The U.S., of course, would be reluctant to carry out military operations against an Arab nation, despite the fact that Syria had initiated the war. It presumably would thus seek to induce the U.S.S.R. to compel Syria to agree to a demilitarized zone on the Heights. These efforts might include military preparations to indicate that the United States would be prepared to take unilateral action if such a settlement were not compelled. If the United States actually did utilize American air power in support of an Israeli counteroffensive, there would be some risk of conflict with Soviet air units, although the latter--if they did become involved--would more likely be used solely in defense of the Syrian hinterland. American participation in the battle for the Golan would also imply that Israeli aims would remain limited to forcing a negotiated settlement or, at most, to regaining the lost territory.
- b. Threaten to use nuclear weapons unless a demilitarized zone were established. It may be assumed that Israel has operational nuclear capabilities, and that surface-to-surface missiles armed with nuclear

warheads would have been mobilized at the outset of any conflict. Attention could be drawn to these weapons in support of Israeli threats in a variety of more-or-less subtle ways. Conceivably, if the situation were serious enough, the Israelis might actually detonate a device against a Syrian target in a demonstration of their resolve. In a symbolic way, however, any threatened or actual nuclear explosion would be directed more at the U.S. than at Syria; it would be intended to make clear to the U.S. the essentiality that it act to induce the Soviets to compel Syrian agreement to a cease-fire.

- c. Request the U.S. to deploy ground and air forces in Israel as means of offsetting the greater threat to Israeli security posed by Syrian reoccupation of the Golan Heights. If the U.S. made it clear that it would not become involved in the battle for the Golan directly, and if Israel wearied of the war because of high casualties or other reasons, the latter might seek the deployment of American forces in Israel as means of compensating for the greater threat to Israel posed by the positioning of Syrian units on the Heights. The deployment of U.S. forces in Israel could, in turn, lead to the deployment of comparable Soviet units in Syria and a changed political situation with an implicit potential for U.S.-Soviet military conflict in the more remote future.
- 4. Syria seizes the Golan Heights in the opening days of the war and continues across Israel's pre-1967 borders.

This scenario is probably the most unlikely, but it would constitute the most extreme version of the previous one. In the event of a breach of the 1967 borders, Israel's use of nuclear weapons would have to be considered a distinct possibility. Moreover, at least in the foreseeable future, direct American military involvement could be almost certain. The possibility of Soviet involvement would seem to be relatively small, however. The situation would likely be brought to a close relatively quickly and, moreover, Soviet intervention would likely be deterred by recognition of the enormous stakes perceived in the situation by the United States.

## IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS

A number of additional situations in the Middle East are sometimes suggested to be potential sources of U.S. - Soviet conflict. These would include the continuing civil war in Lebanon, internal situations in Jordan, Egypt, and North African countries, and potential conflicts among North African states. After some consideration, however, we have determined that none of these situations appeared to incorporate a serious risk of direct combat between U.S. and Soviet military units.

## PATHWAYS TO U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT

The accompanying chart illustrates the possible pathways to U.S.-Soviet conflict which emerge from this analysis. Readers should note that those pathways which do not seem likely to result in a serious risk of conflict are omitted from the chart.

The most serious risks are those resulting from the first scenario--the one in which the war was initiated by Syria but soon turned in Israel's favor. If, in such circumstances, Israel pursued ambitious objectives which threatened Damascus and the Syrian regime, Soviet armed units would be likely to come to its assistance. If the situation continued to deteriorate from a Syrian perspective, it could lead to military actions by the U.S.S.R. to which the U.S. would almost feel compelled to respond militarily.

A comparable situation could develop as a result of the second scenario, in which Israel preempts upon observing Syrian preparations for an attack, but in this case Israel would be in a stronger military position but a weaker political situation, and thus might not pursue its aims so far as to trigger a Soviet intervention.

If the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. did become involved militarily in either scenario, their military interactions would most likely take the form of air battles or, possibly, naval engagements. In most cases, these would likely constitute single, isolated incidents. Both the risk of ground combat and that of a prolonged air/sea engagement would appear to be relatively small, and would be realized only as the result of implausible sequences of events featuring very foolish decisions on the part of both sides.

Situations in which Syria initiates and triumphs in a new war with Israel seem less likely to result in U.S.-Soviet conflict, insofar as the combination of Israel's nuclear capabilities and likely forms of U.S. intervention seem powerful disincentives for the U.S.S.R. to become directly involved itself. There would in these latter cases, however, be some risk of conflict through inadvertent incidents or as a result of long-term changes in the political/military balance in the region.

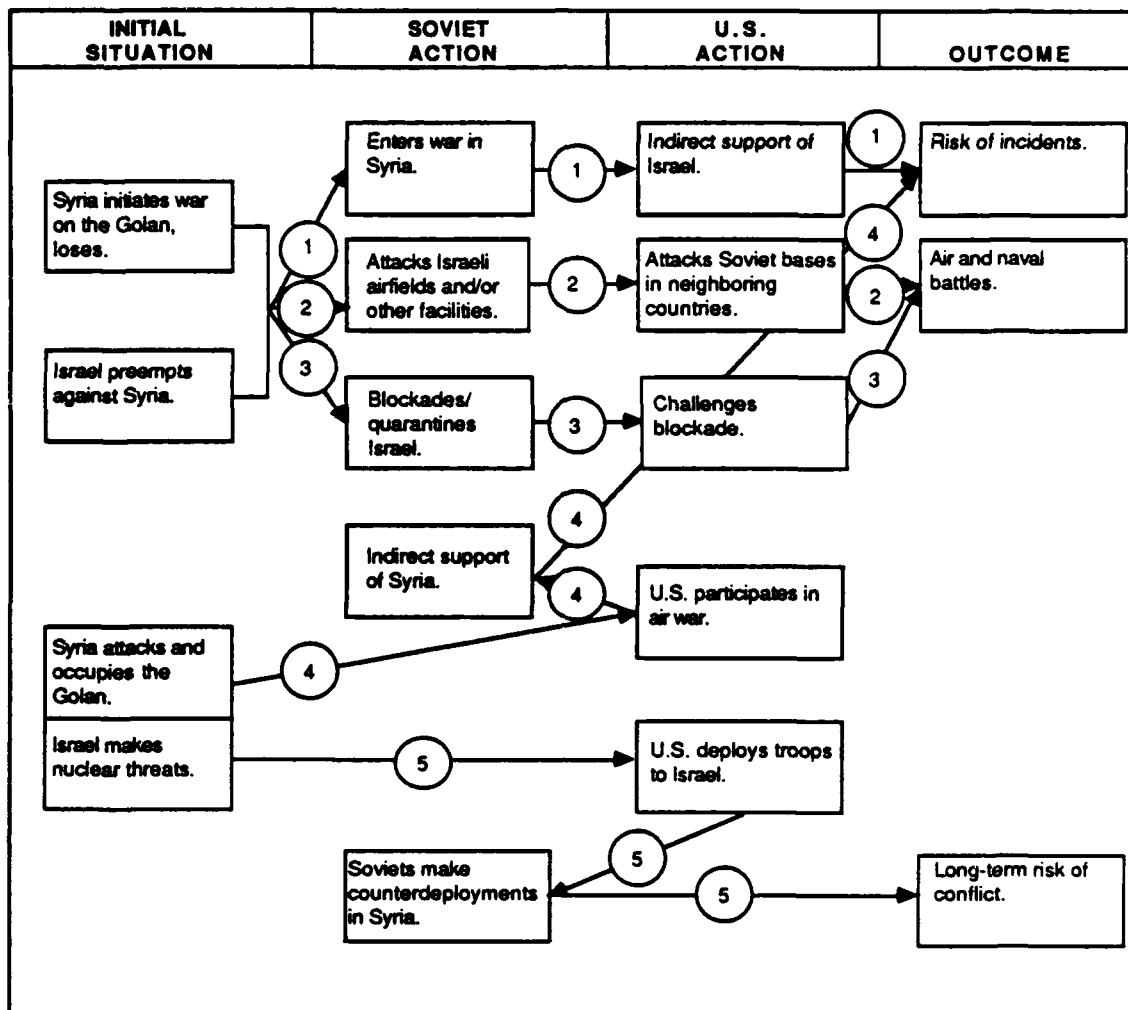


Figure E-1. Pathways to U.S.-Soviet Conflict, Middle East

## LINKS TO OTHER REGIONS

The primary linkages between the Middle East and other regions occur because of the military supply lines of the great powers. The Soviet Union, in considering any large-scale intervention in the Middle East, would benefit greatly from an ability to overfly Turkey and/or Iran. If permission for such rights were not forthcoming, the Soviets conceivably could create difficulties in those regions--depending on local circumstances. The capability of the United States to intervene in the Middle East, on the other hand, would greatly benefit if the U.S. could make use of facilities in Western Europe or even to

draw troops and equipment from that region. The West Europeans would almost certainly strive mightily to remain uninvolved in any new Middle East conflict, however, as they have in the past, and NATO as an organization would seek to remain aloof as well. There is potential here for serious difficulties between the United States and its allies if events in the Middle East escalated to substantial levels.

**Appendix F**

**AFRICA**



## **U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS**

### **Appendix F. AFRICA**

U.S./Soviet conflict is unlikely to originate solely in conditions in Africa. Neither great power perceives its national prestige or core security interests to be sufficiently threatened there to take excessive risks or to pay a high political cost in support of its position there. To the degree that any such dangers exist, however, the evolution of events in the Republic of South Africa and the on-going insurgency in Angola provide two candidates for potential conflict flashpoints. The confused situation in the strategically important northeastern portion of the continent, where insurgencies and instability threaten the governments of Ethiopia, the Sudan, and other states, provides even more remote possibilities, particularly in the context of a U.S./Soviet conflict in the Persian Gulf or South Asia.

#### **PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

The most interesting prospects for U.S./Soviet conflict would originate in crises in the southern part of the continent.

##### **Angola**

Two principal factors coincide to make Angola a conceivable source of U.S./Soviet confrontation in the near- to mid-term. The first is the strong commitment of the Soviet Union to the survival of the current Angolan government. Along with Ethiopia, Angola is the country in sub-Saharan Africa to which the Soviets have committed the greatest economic and military resources and--perhaps more importantly--the most prestige; these efforts have been stepped up in recent years as the internal situation in Angola has deteriorated. Soviet leaders would likely expend a great deal of effort before allowing this investment to be lost. The second factor that makes Angola a potential trouble spot is the nation's ethnic politics. Of the three major ethnic groups in Angola, the largest, the Ovimbundu, are not represented in the central government. The major Angolan insurgent movement, UNITA, is drawn largely from this group, which inhabits the southern and

eastern portions of the country. UNITA thus possesses a stable and powerful base of popular support which has been proven able to survive tactical defeats and temporary setbacks.

These two factors have several important consequences for the future of Angola.

- (a) The military defeat of UNITA would not necessarily spell the end of internal difficulties in Angola. Unless the underlying ethno/political problems were resolved, even the demise of UNITA as an effective organization could be followed by the emergence of a new insurgency in the south over the longer term.
- (b) Given the degree to which the present government of Angola identifies with the Soviet Union, it seems inevitable that anti-government rebel groups in that country will profess anti-Soviet policies. It does not necessarily follow from this that such groups would be pro-American, at least initially, but it does suggest opportunities for U.S. military involvement whenever American leaders wish to pursue an aggressive anti-Soviet posture.

A debate about the wisdom of becoming involved in Angola began in the United States when that nation's civil war first developed at the time of its gaining independence in 1974/75; the debate has continued to the present. A policy of non-involvement was institutionalized in the 1975 Clark Amendment, which specifically prohibited the use of U.S. funds to support insurgent movements in Angola. Popular attitudes appear to be changing, however. Although no U.S. aid had been sent to UNITA at the time this paper was written, the Clark Amendment was repealed in 1985, opening the way for U.S. involvement at some future date. (Discussions of the possibility of covert U.S. aid to UNITA took place within the administration and between the administration and the Congress in late 1985 with apparently no resolution of the issue.)

American reluctance to become involved in Angola stems from:

- (a) The broad political prohibition on military activities in the third world which followed the Vietnam experience;
- (b) The positive economic relationship which has developed between the Luanda regime and certain U.S. companies, particularly Chevron/Gulf Oil, which thus gained a stake in the continued stability of Angola; and
- (c) UNITA's alliance with South Africa in the civil war and continued, if sporadic South African military operations in support of UNITA, which linked the insurgents with a nation that is unacceptable to influential elements in American politics. This identification of Angola with the regime in Pretoria will constrain

American options, so long as it persists, regardless of the administration in power.

If perceptions of the alliance between South Africa and the Angolan rebels were loosened, it would become more plausible to postulate the United States sustaining the sort of overt and substantial military involvement in Angola that would be necessary to imagine the situation in that country leading to a U.S./Soviet confrontation. Such a loosening might occur over a period of years if continued deterioration of the internal South African situation forced the regime in Pretoria to retreat from Angola and other foreign commitments in order to concentrate its forces on domestic problems. In such a case, UNITA would be hard pressed to maintain a viable position without foreign support, which might be forthcoming in sufficient quantities only from the United States. If, at the same time, political incentives in this country for a more aggressive policy in support of third world anti-communist insurgencies had continued to grow, the UNITA request might well receive favorable consideration.

If it occurred, American involvement would probably initially take the form of relatively low levels of covert support provided through intelligence, rather than military, agencies of the U.S. government. More direct American involvement would depend both on the military results obtained in the initial phase of operations and on Soviet reactions.

It is possible that U.S.-backed insurgents might enjoy a measure of initial military success, perhaps extending their control of large rural areas, but still be unable to confront large units of the Angolan army or to hold urban areas. In such a case, incentives would exist for the United States to increase both the amount and scope of aid to the rebels. A logical next step would be to send more sophisticated weapons (air defense systems would be a likely candidate) along with U.S. military advisors. This would introduce Americans into the combat zone, although probably not directly into the fighting.

If the Soviet Union were to maintain its present level of commitment to the Angolan government, it would be unlikely to allow such moves to take place unopposed. In the initial stages of U.S.-backed insurgent activity, the Soviets would continue, and perhaps increase, their supply of military material to the Angolan government. If the government's military position deteriorated, however, it is likely that the Cuban troops and Soviet advisors already in the country would take a more active role in the fighting. This could lead to direct conflict between U.S. and Soviet (or at least Cuban) military personnel.

If fighting continued and the situation worsened from Luanda's point of view, particularly if major urban areas were threatened, the Soviets could call for additional Cuban forces to reinforce the Angolan army, to even move in combat forces of their own, probably air units. These actions could lead to U.S./Soviet conflict in two distinct ways.

In the unlikely event that a significant number of U.S. military personnel were already in Angola, the introduction of Soviet combat units could lead to incidents that involved personnel of the two great powers. A more plausible eventuality, however, would be for the U.S. to refrain from introducing a significant number of Americans into Angola itself, but instead to declare its determination to prevent Soviet reinforcement and resupply of government forces. If this declaration were backed up with an appropriate naval presence in the South Atlantic, it conceivably could lead to confrontations between Soviet and American naval and air forces.

### **Key External Variables**

In addition to specific development in the local conflict, the likelihood of a U.S./Soviet confrontation resulting from the conflict in Angola would depend on a number of external events and conditions.

- (a) Other developments in southern Africa: As suggested previously, the end of the South African military role in Angola, assuming that the insurgency survived, would improve UNITA's political standing in the United States and thus make an American intervention more feasible. This could occur in two ways: (i) A settlement in Namibia that resulted in the removal of South African troops from that country, and thus from proximity to the Angolan theater of operations. (ii) Political developments within South Africa that left it incapable or unwilling to continue its current aggressive regional policy; either a deterioration of the current situation into open civil war or, alternatively, a negotiated settlement that significantly reduced the political influence of the white population could have this effect.
- (b) Domestic politics in the United States: Declaration and wide acceptance of a "Reagan Doctrine" supporting third world anti-Soviet movements as U.S. policy would clearly increase the chances of direct American involvement in Angola.
- (c) Conditions in the Soviet Union: The U.S.S.R. would be more likely to react aggressively to U.S. actions in Angola if its economic situation were improved and its government confident and outward looking.

- (d) The general state of U.S./Soviet relations: A decision by either side to risk confrontation in Angola, as well as a decision to escalate should confrontation occur, would depend heavily on the global character of U.S./Soviet relations and the perceptions of each great power as to the potential impact of the Angolan crisis on its other, more central, interests.

### **Plausible Outcomes**

The Soviet position in Angola is solidly established and has not to date drawn direct U.S. opposition. Accordingly, the initial great power confrontation in Angola would depend entirely on American initiatives in the region. Once such a confrontation took place, however, both powers would have escalatory options. The most plausible of these would seem to be the introduction of Soviet-manned combat aircraft and/or helicopter units in support of the Angolan army, and action by U.S. naval forces to interdict re-supply and reinforcement of the Angolan government. Of these, the naval blockade would be by far the more likely to provoke a direct U.S./Soviet confrontation.

Even if isolated U.S./Soviet clashes were taking place in Angola or on the South Atlantic, however, it does not seem likely that the situation would escalate into a more general U.S./Soviet confrontation unless the global level of tensions between the two powers had already been extraordinarily high. Despite the political commitment of the great powers to various local actors, the inherent strategic value of Angola is not so great as to be the cause of general conflict.

It is probable, therefore, that a confrontation resulting from events in Angola could be contained at a reasonably low level, and that the great powers would seek to find negotiated means of de-escalating the crisis. The form that such a settlement might take would depend on the relative strength of the powers and their local clients, as well as their respective perceptions of the stakes involved in the situation or, alternatively, their respective willingness to risk further conflict. If one side or the other had a clear advantage, it might be in a position to force the other to abandon its local ally. If the two sides were relatively evenly matched, the result might take the form of a compromise which brought some form of national unity government to power in Luanda with which both powers could maintain reasonable relations.

### **South Africa**

It seems probable that the current conflict within the Republic of South Africa will continue to evolve for some time to come and that whatever stable outcome is finally

reached there will be very different from the current situation. The current desire of the United States to distance itself from the South African government would seem to indicate that the chances of a direct U.S. role in this evolution are small; domestic politics alone will assure that this is the case. There are plausible scenarios, however, which might lead to more direct U.S. involvement in the situation.

The U.S. conceivably might become involved in negotiations between the current government of South Africa and the various non-white opposition groups as a mediator. As negotiations continued, the United States might become more and more deeply involved in the situation, and eventually commit itself to guarantee the agreement, perhaps even deploying some U.S. military personnel to oversee various cease-fire or territorial arrangements. Such a process took place during the Egyptian/Israeli peace negotiations, for example, and--ten years after these talks began--U.S. troops still maintain a presence in the Sinai in support of the Camp David agreement. The outcome of South African negotiations could take a number of general forms. One would be a state which maintained the territorial configuration of the present Republic of South Africa, but with a political system that gave predominant power to the country's black population while incorporating measures to safeguard the white minority. A more radical, and probably infeasible solution, although one discussed frequently by the white population, would be the partition of the present South African state into a number of smaller sovereign entities, one of which would be controlled, at least in part, by the white population. Such a state would likely include the heartland of the Rand as well as portions of the Cape. While it would have a substantial non-white population, possibly even a non-white majority, the racial composition of such a country might make it possible for it to be organized on reasonably democratic principles--thus making it acceptable to the United States--without the white population being completely submerged.

As part of the truce arrangements, the U.S. might guarantee the viability of both the white, and the new black states. Such guarantees might be of particular importance if the boundaries of these states, having been drawn up on ethnic rather than geo-strategic lines, left them difficult to defend.

The stability of this situation would be questionable, particularly in the early years. Some individuals and groups would seek to revenge past injustices or to create a larger, more powerful, unified black nation. Others would find it in their interest to cater to such emotions. Depending on the wisdom and skills of the leaders of the new nations, and on such related circumstances as economic performance, the situation could readily deteriorate

and the American guarantee could be put to the test. If the United States then became involved militarily in efforts to halt the fighting and preserve the new sovereign entities, it is plausible to suppose that one or more of the actors opposing the U.S.-backed state or states would request Soviet assistance. Such aid might well be forthcoming, particularly if the the U.S.S.R. were still engaged militarily in Angola.

It is also conceivable that one or both of the great powers might attempt to stake out a position in South Africa to make up for reverses in other parts of the continent. The most obvious incentive for such a maneuver is provided by the Angolan scenario discussed above. If increased U.S. support for the Angolan insurgency were to result in a serious loss of Soviet influence in Luanda, the U.S.S.R. could maintain or reassert itself as a regional actor by offering support and assistance to one or more of the black successor states.

Either situation would be complicated by the fact that any white South African successor state in the 1990s would likely have a usable arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons at its disposal. The existence of this nuclear option could cut several ways. On the one hand, it could give the white state and any local allies that it might have gained a greater degree of military security, at least for a time, and greater latitude for military action. This would serve to make them less dependent on U.S. military support, thus reducing the need for direct American involvement and thereby the risk of U.S./Soviet confrontation. It is also possible, however, that the threat of nuclear weapons in the hands of a white South African government could serve as a pretext for Soviet intervention on behalf of one or more of the threatened African states.

### **Possible Outcomes**

Given the highly speculative nature of this scenario, it is difficult to describe precisely how confrontation and escalation would take place. What seems clear is that, in order for a confrontation to occur, both great powers would have to go out of their way to seek it, since neither has a significant presence in the region at this time. By this reasoning, it could follow that if one or both of the great powers developed an interest in the region compelling enough to break new foreign policy ground by offering support and guarantees to states which had not previously been the recipient of their largesse, this interest would be perceived as sufficiently important to defend with considerable effort if it were challenged by the other power. The tentative conclusion reached for this scenario, therefore, is that while the chain of events leading up to confrontation is long and tortuous, having what can

only be considered as a very low overall probability, the risk of escalation if such a confrontation were ever reached might be significant.

### **Northeast Africa**

Strong ties have formed between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union since the radicalization of the Ethiopian regime in the late 1970s. Large quantities of Soviet military equipment have been transferred to Ethiopia and substantial numbers of Cuban combat forces and Soviet and East European advisors are located in the country. The United States, for its part, has clear strategic interests in the Sudan, primarily because of the importance of that country for the security of both Egypt and Saudi Arabia, as seen by the leaders of those countries.

The governments of the Sudan and Ethiopia face serious problems, including endemic separatist insurgencies, extremely poor economic conditions, and strained relations with neighboring states. It is conceivable, therefore, that the great powers might, at some point, find it necessary to become directly involved in the support of their respective allies. It appears unlikely, however, that such involvement could lead directly to U.S./Soviet conflict.

The potential for great power conflict in Northeast Africa derives rather from the critical strategic role of the region as a staging point for U.S. military action farther to the east. If the U.S. were to engage in military operations in South Asia or the Persian Gulf, facilities and rights in Northeast African countries (Egypt, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia) would be needed to secure a line of supply linking the forces involved to bases in the United States or Western Europe.

It is possible that the Soviet Union could attempt to disrupt American operations by interfering with this African link in the U.S. supply line. Such a move could be launched from Ethiopia, making use of the material and infrastructure already in place. In short, Northeast Africa might be turned into a subsidiary theater of military operations.

A second possibility along similar lines would be for a sudden build-up of U.S. forces in a northeast African country to destabilize the host government, leading to civil unrest which could feed into existing ethnic and political tensions, and which could provide an opportunity for Soviet intervention--again probably from Ethiopia--in support of local insurgency movements. The primary motive for such a Soviet move, however, would still



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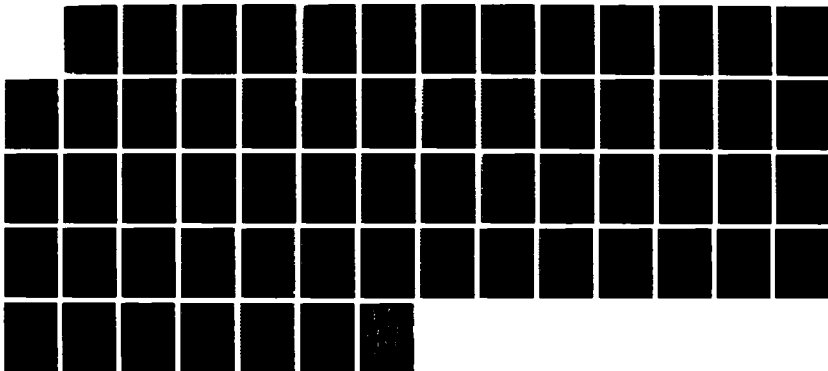
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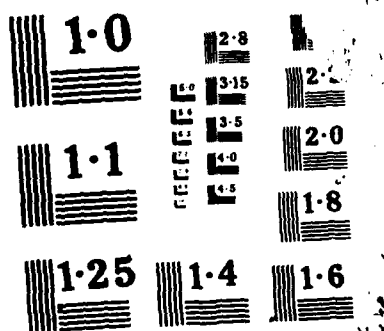
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be the disruption of U.S. military efforts rather than bringing about local political changes for their own sake.

### **Key External Variables**

This scenario would be driven entirely by outside events, presupposing as it does the involvement of U.S. troops in Southwest Asia on a scale large enough to require long-term supply facilities in Northeast Africa. It is not absolutely essential that this original conflict involve the Soviets directly; domestic problems in Iran or another Persian Gulf country could provide a sufficient motive for the required U.S. military activity. In such a case, however, it is difficult to imagine a Soviet reaction beyond the encouragement of local insurgencies. Only if the Soviet Union were directly involved in the primary conflict would it be reasonable to expect that they would consider the risk of direct intervention in Africa. It also should be noted that under the conditions described here, a second potential pressure point on U.S. supply lines would likely exist in Northwest Africa, most probably in Morocco. The lack of a solid Soviet position in that region, however, makes it even less likely that the U.S.S.R. would attempt to disrupt U.S. operations in Northwest Africa.

### **IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

Scenarios that were considered but rejected as wholly implausible included confrontations growing out of political turmoil and even civil wars in Nigeria or Zaire, conflicts among the the various countries of North Africa, the on-going insurgencies in Chad, Mozambique, and the Western Sahara, and purely local conflicts in Northeast Africa. Each of these instances presents the probability, or at least the possibility, of conflict in the foreseeable future, and has the potential to draw in one or the other of the great powers. In none of these cases, however, is either the level of existing great power commitment or the inherent strategic importance of the situation sufficient to expect intervention by both great powers on a scale sufficient to lead to conflict between them.

### **PATHWAYS TO U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT**

The scenarios examined in this paper present two very different types of pathways to conflict. In the southern Africa scenarios, conflict would result from the increasing identification of the great powers with the needs and desires of local actors. The potential for conflict in Northeast Africa, on the other hand, exists only in the presence of an ongoing conflict elsewhere and would be driven by the strategic necessities of that primary

conflict. The only common characteristic of the scenarios examined is that in each case one or both of the great powers would have to go out of its way to seek conflict. Nowhere in Africa do we find a situation comparable to Central Europe, where the great powers have significant military assets in close proximity to each other, or to the Middle East, where the great powers have developed close alliances over long periods of time with highly armed and mutually antagonistic states.

The generic pathways to U.S./Soviet conflict in Africa are summarized in the Figure F-1. There are five such paths, four beginning with conflicts in southern Africa and one with a confrontation in Northeast Africa. [Readers should note that only pathways which lead to a serious risk of conflict are included in the chart.]

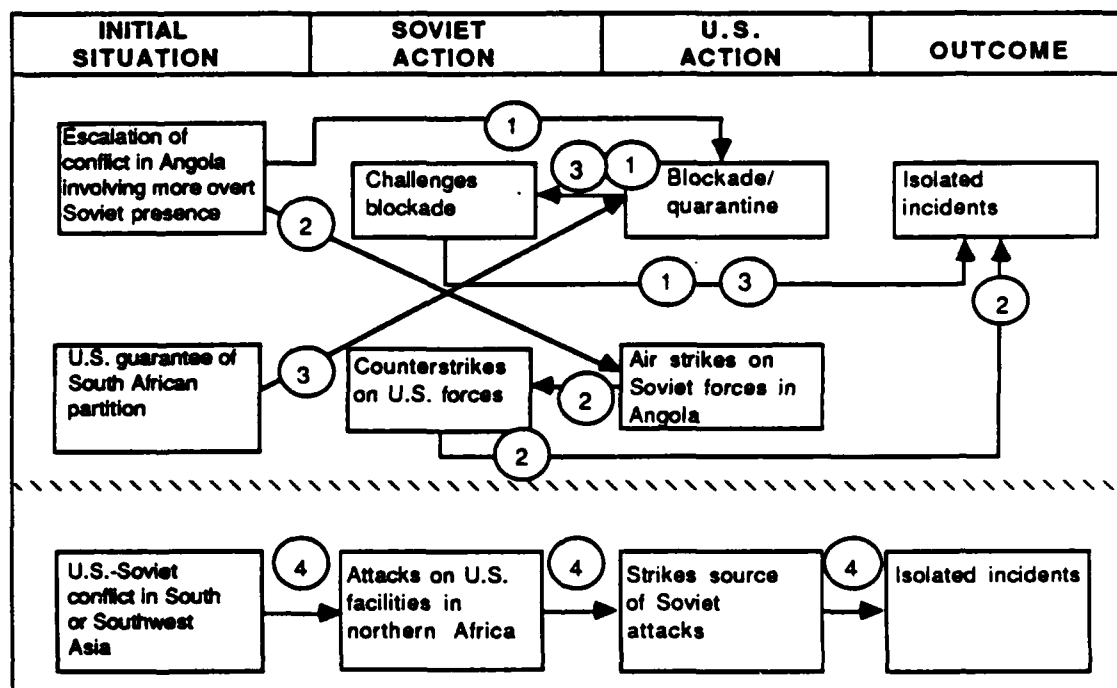


Figure F-1. Pathways to U.S.-Soviet Conflict, Africa

It bears repeating that the risk of any U.S./Soviet confrontation arising from a situation in Africa appears to be remote. Neither great power perceives a sufficient stake in the region to take the type of risks which might lead to such a conflict.

## LINKS TO OTHER REGIONS

Only the last of the scenarios examined here is directly linked to events beyond Africa; it would be driven solely by such events and would be entirely implausible unless large-scale conflict occurred elsewhere first. A number of links might also be seen among the various conflict possibilities in southern Africa, but apart from the ever important consideration of the global level of U.S./Soviet tensions and the willingness of the great powers to seek confrontation, no clear links exist between them and specific events in the rest of the world.

**Appendix G**

**SOUTHERN EUROPE**

## U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS

### Appendix G. SOUTHERN EUROPE\*

Historically a source of conflict among the major European powers, the Balkans retain the potential to stimulate confrontation and even war between East and West. Conflicts in southern Europe frequently have originated in the long standing enmity between the Serbs and neighboring nationalities. Today, these ethnic groups are joined politically in the nation of Yugoslavia, but continuing social and political unrest within that country, combined with the prospect of serious economic problems over the next fifteen years, suggest future challenges to Yugoslavia's integrity. Given the fragile nature of the tacit East-West understanding concerning Yugoslavia's posture with regard to the two European alliances, severe internal problems in Yugoslavia plausibly could lead to a major East-West clash.

Other areas of southeastern Europe also face major international problems and internal unrest. The economic situation in Romania is disastrous, for example, and the stability of its political system may soon face challenges. The Greek-Turkish conflict creates a second persistent source of potential conflict. None of these problems seem plausible as sources of East-West conflict, however.

#### BACKGROUND

Many of the economic, political, and social problems which have led periodically to serious tensions and instabilities within Yugoslavia have their roots in that country's historical development and ethnic characteristics. Efforts to build a strong centralized government have been hampered by the cultural and linguistic differences among Yugoslavia's various nationalities, as well as by the long-standing historical and political antagonisms that separate them.

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\* This paper is based on a discussion held at the Institute for Defense Analyses on November 1, 1985. Participants included Barry Blechman, Robert Hunter, Robbin Laird, Stephen Larrabee, Marc Smyrl, Victor Utgoff, and Eugene Wickland. The specific views expressed in this paper are not necessarily endorsed by each of these individuals.

The best known of these ethnic problems is the conflict between Serbs and Croats, which flared into open civil war during the Second World War. In the past few years, isolated terrorist attacks against Yugoslav targets have been carried out by groups claiming to be Croatian nationalists. More generally, the numerically inferior Croats are known to harbor considerable resentment towards what they see as Serbian domination of the Yugoslav state. Potentially serious ethnic problems also exist in the southern part of Yugoslavia, where the large Albanian minority appears to be increasingly restive under Serbian domination. The Republic of Macedonia, finally, presents a problem of its own, since the entire area is a target of long-standing claims by neighboring Bulgaria.

These sectional problems are aggravated by increasingly severe economic difficulties. Relatively prosperous Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia exist in sharp contrast to the less developed regions of southern Yugoslavia, particularly those inhabited by the Albanian and Macedonian minorities. At the same time, the economic outlook for Yugoslavia as a whole has deteriorated steadily for several years as the global recession of the early 1980s and, more importantly, the relative inefficiency and resulting non-competitiveness of many Yugoslav industries have reduced the country's export earnings, and thus its potential to import the products and technology needed for economic modernization. Accordingly, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the central government to gain support in the poorer regions of the country by financing their rapid economic development.

This problem has a paradoxical flavor. While the reduction in economic transfers to the poorer provinces has strained their already tenuous links of loyalty to Belgrade, the necessary continuance of these transfers--even at reduced levels--is a source of increasing resentment for the populations of Yugoslavia's wealthier regions. Taken to its logical conclusion, this latter sentiment could lead to an anti-minority backlash in Serbia and other northern republics, resulting in a less accommodating and more authoritarian government in Belgrade.

As its terms of trade with the West have become steadily less favorable, Yugoslavia has been forced into greater economic dependence on trade with the nations of Eastern Europe. Since large-scale trade with Eastern Europe inevitably is carried out by governments rather than firms, this economic orientation has necessarily had distinct political overtones. The central government of Yugoslavia, so long as it remains dependent on trade with the East, could find it extremely difficult to expand political relations with the West.



Other factors, however, seem to point to a gradual social and political evolution toward the West for Yugoslavia. Unlike the countries of the Soviet bloc, Yugoslavia has been relatively open to Western influences for the past several decades. Large numbers of Yugoslav 'gastarbeiters' have gone to work in the countries of the European Economic Community, while increasing numbers of West European tourists have arrived in Yugoslavia. West European media and popular culture are widely available in Yugoslavia's urban areas and seem to have a broad following, in contrast to the almost total lack of public interest, much less support, for things Russian. As a new generation which has grown up in this more cosmopolitan environment comes to power in the next decade, its impact on Yugoslav society and politics could be far reaching.

These conflicting trends and tendencies are proving an increasingly severe strain on Yugoslavia's unwieldy system of central government. Designed by Marshal Tito to balance the need for national unity against the realities of regional particularism, the government consists of a permanent federal executive council, the chairmanship of which rotates among representatives of the various republics. Such a system does not seem to be well suited for decisions involving the allocation of central resources to the republics, or for enforcing general policy directions on recalcitrant regional interests. As global economic and political trends are felt unevenly in the country's different geographic areas, these shortcomings in the central government could lead to very severe internal problems.

### **PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

The conditions for a confrontation between the great powers probably do not yet exist in Yugoslavia. Neither seems to perceive a vested interest in the country sufficient to defend by force; nor does either great power appear to perceive an opportunity to acquire a decisive advantage in the country through the use of force without running substantial risks. In the aftermath of the Nazi occupation and civil war in Yugoslavia, the United States and the Soviet Union (and their respective allies) reached a tacit arrangement respecting the country's independence and neutrality. As much a tribute to the tenacity and courage of Marshal Tito and the fierce reputation of Yugoslav partisans during the war as to their mutual interest in avoiding a new war over Yugoslavia's allegiances, East and West have agreed to leave the country outside the alliance system. This arrangement has served the great powers' interests well and each has considerable incentive to preserve it.

Still, as Yugoslavia is a part of Europe and not some remote third world region, any change in the country's international status would be understood as having direct

implications for the future of the whole European alliance system. Either great power would become greatly agitated should it appear that, for whatever reason, Yugoslavia might be slipping into the opposing camp; neither great power would likely sit idly by while such a change was being implemented. Thus, while they are mutually deterred from acting in Yugoslavia so long as there is a modicum of stability in the country, should internal conditions change, both sides could rapidly lose confidence in the country's future status. Under certain circumstances, there might then ensue a situation in which the great powers became directly involved in a rapidly escalating crisis.

What are those special circumstances? Realistically, no matter how fierce their rhetoric and political/military maneuvering might become in the event of new Yugoslav crisis, the actual or imminent entry of Soviet troops into the country would seem to be an essential prerequisite for any direct East-West military confrontation. One cannot plausibly postulate that the West might be the first to inject military forces into the country.

A further prerequisite would likely be the existence of significant local resistance to the Soviet military presence which seemed to be gaining strength with time. A Soviet occupation which appeared to be successful from the outset would discourage any Western counteraction. Given the record of Yugoslav partisans during the war, the topography of the country, the historic anti-Russian feelings of much of the population, and the plans and organization of the Yugoslav armed forces for exactly such resistance on a regional basis, it seems likely that this second condition would be fulfilled. But taking into account the likelihood of effective popular resistance, a projection which is widely accepted, why would the Soviet Union ever decide to send forces into Yugoslavia, thus fulfilling the first prerequisite for East-West confrontation?

Although Yugoslavia has a certain symbolic value to the Soviet Union, its actual strategic significance is not overwhelming. Soviet control of Yugoslavia would permit the U.S.S.R. to construct air and naval facilities that would present a greater threat to NATO's southern flank and further isolate Greece and Turkey from the main body of the alliance. But the U.S.S.R. itself is cushioned by Bulgaria and Romania from direct access to Yugoslavia and the country thus would not in any circumstances present a direct threat to Soviet territories. Soviet assessments of Yugoslavia's relative strategic insignificance is demonstrated by the unwillingness of even Stalin to challenge the country's break with the U.S.S.R. in 1948, as well as by subsequent Soviet leaders' continued tolerance of the country's ambiguous status.

Accordingly, it seems reasonable to assume that the Soviet Union would intervene in Yugoslavia only if it felt reasonably confident that internal conditions in Yugoslavia had changed so substantially that it would have at least some reliable base of institutional, if not popular, support. Some event would have had to cause Soviet leaders to believe that there was reason to believe that the cost of an intervention could be contained. An intervention that could credibly be construed as an act taken in support of a friendly government, for example, could provoke elements of the population to a lesser extent, assure the Soviets of local allies, and, initially at least, provide a reasonably safe geographic area for staging military operations.

It is likely, given historical and current political tendencies, that the only national group in Yugoslavia which would ever seek Soviet support would be the Serbs. The bitterness between Yugoslavia's other ethnic groups and Russians is too long-standing and too deeply entrenched to imagine such alliances. In the scenarios which follow, therefore, several possible situations are described in which a Serbian regional government or a Serbian-dominated central government requests Soviet military intervention. The emergence of such a situation would appear to be a common prerequisite for any scenario postulating the development of East-West conflict in Yugoslavia.

The other major variable which will determine the structure and extent of Yugoslav scenarios is obviously the potential Western reaction to the Soviet move. Other things being equal, there is reason to believe that this reaction would be significant. Unlike previous Soviet actions in eastern Europe, an intervention in Yugoslavia would call into question the territorial and political arrangements which have governed international relations in Europe since the late 1940s and which have resulted in an unprecedented forty years of peace and prosperity. Any Soviet intervention in Yugoslavia would likely be seen as a direct challenge to western Europe's integrity and a harbinger of more direct onslaughts in the future. Resistance to the intervention would likely be understood as a crucial test of NATO's will and capabilities.

### **1. Insurgencies in Yugoslavia**

If the centrifugal social and economic forces within Yugoslavia previously noted gained strength, the response of the central government in Belgrade might become considerably less accommodating to provincial demands than it has been to date. A negative Serbian reaction to "overly generous" treatment of minorities, combined with a faction in the Yugoslav military establishment determined to preserve national unity at any

cost, could produce a Serbian/military governing coalition that effectively supplanted the current Yugoslav system of rotating presidencies.

Such a group might find it necessary to employ considerable force to keep control of the country, thus provoking additional violence, and eventually a truly repressive government might emerge. Such a government would probably lose much of the support that Yugoslavia has built up in Western Europe and the United States as evidence of its excesses became available. More seriously, it might find itself losing, rather than gaining control over the non-Serbian portions of Yugoslavia.

In such a situation, the central government might find itself desperately in need of foreign economic and military assistance. If the Western nations refused such aid on the grounds that they could not support a government with such an appalling human rights record, Yugoslav leaders might turn to the Soviet Union, even if their own ideological orientation had not been particularly compatible. (An alternative scenario, which could lead to the same East-West confrontation, would be for the internal situation described here to lead to a second coup in Belgrade by a pro-Soviet military faction.)

#### **Soviet Motives and Tactics**

The Soviet government's response to the request for assistance would depend importantly on international circumstances. Certain conditions would encourage Soviet leaders to look favorably on this apparent opportunity to regain a dominant position in Yugoslavia. A perceived weakening of the strength and cohesion of the NATO alliance, for example, could have such an effect. If Western nations were disunited or preoccupied by other matters, the Soviet Union might conclude that the risk of a significant and coordinated NATO reaction to an intervention in Yugoslavia would be small. If NATO's weakness were seen as temporary, and the duration of the U.S.S.R.'s freedom of action thus limited, Soviet leaders might perceive special incentives to act decisively. Faced with the choice between an immediate intervention which stood a good chance of securing a permanent, predominant Soviet role in Yugoslavia and the longer term possibility that a disintegrating Yugoslavia could fall into the orbit of a resurgent West, it is conceivable that Soviet leaders would choose to act, despite the risk of becoming embroiled in a continuing internal conflict. This is, after all, very much the calculation made by Soviet leaders in deciding to intervene in Afghanistan in 1979.

A second consideration for the Soviet Union would be conditions in Eastern Europe. Intervention in Yugoslavia might be seen as particularly attractive if Soviet control

were threatened in other countries. It would demonstrate Soviet power and resolve--and presumably highlight the impotence of Western reaction--without taking action directly against an existing member of the Soviet bloc. Assuming that the intervention in Yugoslavia were successful, such a tactic would clearly make any groups in Eastern Europe that had harbored thoughts of breaking away from Soviet domination reconsider their chances of success. (An unsuccessful intervention, of course, would have the opposite effect. This would be another risk involved in the Soviet course of action examined here.)

If the security situation inside Yugoslavia had deteriorated so far as to force the government in Belgrade to request Soviet assistance--knowing full well what the price of that assistance would be in terms of lost independence--the deployment of Soviet troops would almost certainly be required to regain control. Such an intervention might succeed in imposing tranquility in most of Serbia and in other major urban areas, but it would be resisted elsewhere in the country.

Facing such a Soviet occupation, it is not implausible that what had previously been disorganized opposition to the central government might become one or more full-fledged anti-Soviet insurgencies. Yugoslavia is peculiarly well suited to such operations. The difficult nature of the terrain in much of the country would give irregular forces important advantages over conventional military formations. Yugoslav partisans presumably would enjoy widespread popular support and cooperation. Finally, the existing structure and doctrine of the Yugoslav military, with its emphasis on territorial defenses and a large standing force of well trained reserve troops, provides an almost ideal framework for the formation of insurgent groups. Likely bases for such insurgencies would be Slovenia and Croatia in the north and Macedonia in the south; these are areas in which Serbian or Soviet occupation would be resisted with equal enthusiasm, and in which partisans could have ready access to foreign support.

### **Western Reactions**

The availability of Western support would depend in large part on the position taken by NATO and by specific Western countries. Greece and Italy, having direct borders with Yugoslavia, would be of particular importance, but the reaction of the alliance as a whole would be crucial in determining whether covert, or even open, support might be offered to the partisans. It is conceivable that considerable popular support would exist in Europe for such action. If the level of popular support demonstrated for the much more distant Afghan

insurgency is any guide, considerable sentiment exists in Europe in favor of aid to anti-Soviet insurgencies. Moreover, Yugoslavia is a country with which many Europeans are familiar as a result of vacations or business travel or trade and which is believed to be somewhat Western in orientation. Yugoslavia is clearly not considered to have been "written off" by the West in the way that such Soviet bloc countries as Poland are perceived to have been.

Reactions at the government level are less easy to predict. The introduction of Soviet troops would clearly give a different complexion to the situation than it would have had as an internal Yugoslav conflict. Although Yugoslavia is not formally protected by NATO, such a direct challenge to European territorial and political arrangements, if not answered, would raise grave questions concerning NATO's meaning and integrity. Moreover, the fact that the Soviet intervention had taken place in Europe, rather than in a comfortably distant third-world country, would leave all concerned with less maneuvering room and a much smaller margin of error. The situation would be closely watched; governments would perceive enormous political pressures for effective action.

It is probable that there would be some frantic effort made to find a negotiated solution to the conflict within Yugoslavia, but if the Soviet Union ignored or resisted such attempts, it is conceivable that support would be made available to the various insurgent groups. At first, such support would probably take the form of weapons and supplies, logistical assistance, and advice. A more dangerous move would be to offer sanctuary to the insurgents, but Western countries might end up doing this unknowingly, at least at first, if the troubles within Yugoslavia created large-scale refugee flows out of the country.

### **Plausible Outcomes**

If the situation were to evolve to the point where ongoing insurgencies remained viable and depended on supplies from one or more Western nations, the further evolution of the situation would depend on the linked questions of how far the Soviets were willing to go to disrupt outside supply lines to Yugoslav insurgents, and how far the insurgents' Western supporters were willing to go to protect those same supply lines. Soviet forces would clearly take all possible actions to cut supply lines within Yugoslavia, including shooting down aircraft in Yugoslav air space and pursuing aggressive mine laying and coastal defense strategies to interdict supplies coming in by sea. Assuming that the Western effort was ostensibly "covert," meaning that Soviet and Western armed forces

would not overtly become embroiled in combat, such actions and the incidents to which they led would probably not be sufficient to trigger a broader conflict.

If such measures were not successful in halting the flow of foreign assistance to insurgent forces, however, and the partisans began to enjoy military triumphs, Soviet leaders would have to consider expanding the scope of their interdiction efforts. The types of incidents which could follow from a more aggressive policy--interception of, or attacks on, ships in international waters, and perhaps even raids against insurgent supply depots, training camps, or transfer points on Greek or Italian territory--would be much harder for the West to ignore. Initial successes by the insurgent forces also could lead their Western supporters to consider more significant and direct forms of involvement; while low levels of covert aid would probably suffice to prevent the irregular forces from being defeated, more extensive support would be required for them to impose sufficiently large costs on Soviet forces to cause the USSR to consider negotiating its way out of the country.

The next step would depend on the general state of East-West relations in Europe and in the rest of the world, but perhaps even more importantly on the condition of the NATO alliance and particularly on the willingness of NATO's European members to risk conflict with the Soviet Union. Great efforts would certainly be made to de-escalate the situation. It is possible, however, that either or both the United States and the Soviet Union would find it difficult to back down, for fear of losing credibility with their respective allies in Europe, or that one or the other would come to believe that if it only would persevere, the other would certainly give in before the situation got out of control.

In assessing the risk of such an impasse, it is necessary to bear in mind the international situations which were stated to be likely prerequisites to the initial Soviet decision to intervene. If the Soviet intervention had been resisted by the West despite the existence of serious weaknesses in, or differences among, the NATO countries, one of the prerequisites, the West might find it difficult to present a unified negotiating position vis-a-vis the Soviets. Further, there would be concern that any action which might be perceived in the West as defeat or weakness, in such circumstances might precipitate the final disintegration of the alliance. Both factors might force the United States and NATO leaders to take a more inflexible position than might otherwise be considered optimal. The Soviets, for their part, could face similar constraints if they were threatened by serious dissension in one or more countries of Eastern Europe. While a Soviet triumph in Yugoslavia might have considerable value of example in Poland or East Germany, a perceived defeat in Yugoslavia would leave the Soviet position in Eastern Europe more tenuous than ever.

Appreciation for this danger would cause Soviet leaders to be more inflexible in Yugoslavia than they might otherwise prefer.

Barring a negotiated end to the crisis, the logic of the military situation would determine the actions of each side. Soviet attacks on Western shipping in international waters could be countered by providing air cover to ships transporting supplies to the insurgents through the Adriatic, a move which could lead to direct clashes between NATO and Soviet aircraft. Soviet air raids on Yugoslav insurgent targets on NATO territory would be more serious, and could be met with retaliatory air strikes on Soviet units inside Yugoslavia. Eventually, the two sides might begin to stage ground forays across Yugoslavia's borders with Italy and Greece--the Soviets to disrupt insurgent operations, the West to preempt such potential raids.

Moreover, such actions on the Yugoslav borders could not take place without having direct repercussions on the general military dispositions of the two sides in Europe. It seems certain that both NATO and the Warsaw Pact would place their forces on the European Central and Northern Fronts on increased alert levels from the inception of the crisis, and that these levels would be maintained or increased as the situation escalated. In such a situation, the risk of accidental incidents or inadvertent conflicts would always be present. Eventually, one side or the other could well decide that the point of no return had been passed, that a general war had become inevitable. Once such a perception took hold, a decision to launch large-scale military operations in central Europe would not be far behind.

## **2. Disintegration of Yugoslavia**

If the growing economic disparities among Yugoslavia's various regions, added to existing social differences and ethnic antagonisms, were to proceed unabated for the next several years, the process of devolution of authority to Yugoslavia's constituent republics at the expense of the central government, which has been noted since the death of Marshal Tito, could increase both in speed and in scope. It is possible that at some time in the not-too-distant future, the various Yugoslav republics could have attained a state of de facto autonomy. In such a scenario, it is reasonable to believe that one or more of the republics could seek to develop direct links to foreign powers. These relations would likely begin on the economic and cultural level, but if the republics gained increasing practical autonomy, political relationships could be developed as well. In particular, it is possible that the northern republics of Croatia and Slovenia might seek to expand their relations with



Western Europe. Eventually, one or the other might declare its independence and seek recognition and support from the West.

In response to such a development, or even to the threat of such an action being taken, the Serbian-dominated government in Belgrade, which in all likelihood would still be trying to impose its authority over all of Yugoslavia, might seek to renew closer ties to the Soviet Union. Historical links, albeit rather tenuous ones, exist between Serbs and Russians. Serbia's economy is also linked more to Eastern Europe than are the increasingly Western-oriented economies of Croatia and Slovenia. More importantly, the Belgrade government would have no other political option.

Under such conditions, Soviet aid to Serbia might include the deployment of ground and air forces with the clear purpose of assisting the government in Belgrade to regain control over the whole of the country. The initial deployment of Soviet troops in Serbia might be relatively peaceful. If Soviet and/or Serbian forces began to try to reassert authority over other parts of the country, however, resistance could be expected. It is possible, moreover, that faced with the prospect of a Russian invasion, the non-Serbian republics that had not previously declared their independence would do so and at once seek open diplomatic and military support from the West.

Such a development would put the NATO countries in a difficult situation. There would probably be a great deal of support, both at the popular and the governmental level, for helping the Yugoslav republics resist Soviet aggression. On the other hand, it would be clear that offering recognition and support to the new republics would risk a serious conflict with the Soviet Union.

From its outset, such a conflict would be different than the initial quasi-covert operations envisaged in the first scenario, and would be considerably more dangerous. Defense of the newly independent republics against a major Soviet/Serbian attack would require a major commitment of Western military forces in Yugoslavia itself. If such a step were taken and large-scale ground combat between East and West ensued, as it almost certainly would, it would be more difficult to imagine how escalation might be avoided than to outline the paths that it might take.

#### **Plausible Outcomes**

Faced with the prospect of a major war in Europe, there would be considerable incentive for the great powers to settle the issue with the utmost dispatch. One possible

solution, of course, would be the reconstitution of a unified, neutral Yugoslavia. Internal conditions within that country, however, could make this impossible. An alternative would be to agree to a standstill, in which each side retained predominant influences in those areas which it already controlled. Under the assumptions defining this scenario, Serbia would remain in the Soviet sphere--probably to a much greater extent than Yugoslavia at present--while Slovenia and Croatia would continue their evolution towards the West. The fate of the southern regions of Yugoslavia under such an arrangement would be less clear. Minority problems would certainly re-surface, along with the unsettled claims of Bulgaria and Albania to portions of Yugoslav territory. If an initial great power agreement were reached, however, these problems could probably be settled, although perhaps not to the satisfaction of the local forces involved.

If such an arrangement were not attainable, the escalatory process would resemble that described in the first scenario. It could well be more direct and rapid, however, since the intermediate step of covert support for insurgency movements would not likely exist. Assuming that the Soviet Union were committed to the restoration of Serbian domination (and incidentally to the imposition of Soviet influence) over all of Yugoslavia and had deployed troops to back this commitment, the initial Western involvement would also have to be a major commitment of troops in support of the newly independent republics. (Of course, if the West hesitated and Soviet-supported Serbian forces were able to depose the formal republic governments, the possibility of insurgent activity with Western support would still exist.)

It is possible that the crisis could be ended, or at least contained, at this stage, perhaps by means of a cease-fire arrangement which would leave the forces of both sides in place until a more permanent settlement could be reached. If the United States and the Soviet Union failed to reach agreement very quickly, however, the military logic of the situation would point to enhanced preparedness and ultimately combat between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces in central Europe.

## **IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

There are a number of other actual and potential conflicts in southeastern Europe. None of these seem to contain a significant risk of U.S./Soviet confrontation, however.

## **Greek-Turkish Problems**

The ongoing antagonism between Greece and Turkey, and the manifestations of that antagonism on Cyprus, long have been major problems for NATO. The situation as it currently exists clearly diminishes the alliance's potential effectiveness in the eastern Mediterranean, and thus works to the advantage of the Soviet Union. A number of factors, however, would seem to argue against the possibility that this problem might somehow be the source of a direct East-West confrontation.

In order for such a confrontation to develop, the Soviet Union would have to increase its influence within either Greece or Turkey dramatically. Conditions in Turkey, in particular the power and stability of Turkey's strongly Western-oriented military establishment, make such a Soviet move in that country highly implausible. It is conceivable that the Soviet Union could increase its influence in Greece substantially. It is not clear, however, that it would be to its advantage to do so.

Soviet leaders are certainly aware that the necessary consequence of closer ties between Greece and the Soviet Union would be an even greater identification and cooperation with the West by the Turks. It is also likely that Turkey, in such circumstances, would become even less accommodating towards Soviet policy in the Middle East. Possible Turkish actions along these lines would include denying overflight privileges to Soviet aircraft headed for Syria or Iraq, and making bases in eastern Turkey available to the United States for unilateral, in addition to strictly NATO, operations. It is difficult to conceive of any advantage to the U.S.S.R. deriving from closer ties with Greece that would outweigh setbacks such as these.

## **Other Conflicts**

Other conflicts which were considered and determined to be irrelevant for the purposes of this study were problems between Bulgaria and both Greece or Turkey, between Albania and Yugoslavia, and between Turkey and Kurdish separatists.

## **PATHWAYS TO U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT**

The possibility of U.S./Soviet conflict in southeastern Europe is based on the unique nature of Yugoslavia as a potentially unstable country in the midst of Europe with links to both East and West. The political and geographic proximity of Yugoslavia to the heart of the East-West struggle, Germany, is the primary reason for the potentially explosive nature of these scenarios.

It is important to note that the situations leading up to confrontation are induced almost exclusively by internal Yugoslav problems. It is not clear that either great power would have the ability to influence their development at early stages, or--given the implicit dangers of the situation--that either side would wish to create such a problem. Only if one or more local factions decided to seek outside assistance would the great powers become involved. At that point, however, the time available for analysis and consultation would likely be short. If the Soviet Union accepted an invitation to deploy troops into Yugoslavia, the United States and NATO would face the choice of either accepting a major gain in Soviet influence in Europe or risking serious conflict. Opportunities for compromise and negotiation, if they existed at all, would be brief.

Generic pathways to U.S./Soviet conflict in Yugoslavia are outlined on the attached chart. Readers should note that only paths which lead to a significant probability of conflict have been included.

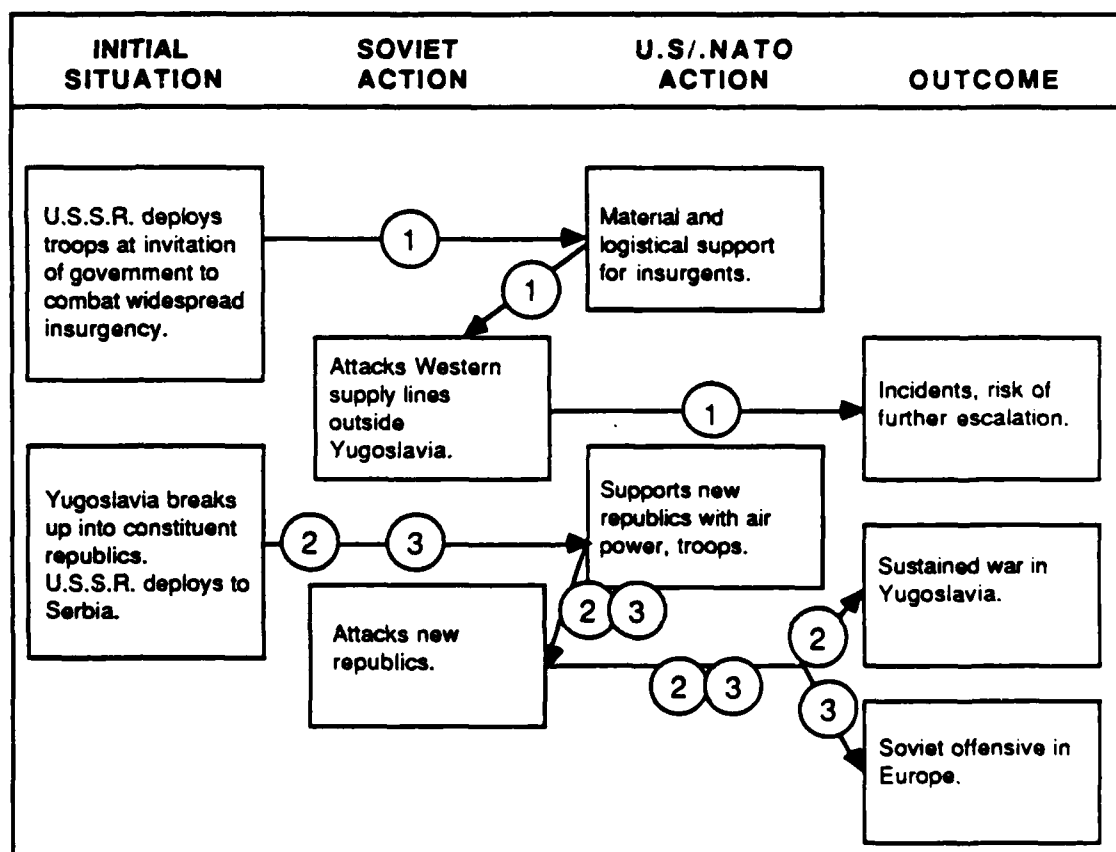


Figure G-1. Pathways to U.S.-Soviet Conflict, Southern Europe

## LINKS TO OTHER REGIONS

If a Yugoslav crisis were to occur, it would be certain to influence great power relations in other areas. If hostilities in Yugoslavia were to reach the point of open military conflict between U.S. and Soviet units, expansion of the conflict into other parts of Europe would be possible, and perhaps unavoidable. Even an ongoing covert conflict would be likely to lead to a heightened state of readiness for NATO and Warsaw Pact troops throughout Europe, which could itself be the source of further incidents.

**Appendix H**

**CENTRAL EUROPE**

## U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS

### Appendix H. CENTRAL EUROPE\*

Control of central Europe represents to both sides the penultimate stakes of the U.S./Soviet competition. Not surprisingly, the region hosts the greatest concentration of the military forces of the two sides. In the 1940s and 1950s, when the political situation in central Europe was more fluid, confrontations and incidents involving U.S. and Soviet military units were not unusual and an expectation of East-West conflict was common. Tensions peaked during the Berlin crisis of 1961/62, however, and since then, with rare and short-lived exceptions, the risk of war has appeared to be remote.

Initiation of the detente policy in the 1960s, the signing of peace treaties between the Federal Republic of Germany and East European states, and the development of relations between East Germany and western nations have led to the gradual improvement of political, economic, and social relations between East and West. These ties have deepened over the years and there is now a rich variety and intense set of exchanges between the two sides in Europe. Moreover, these relatively benign relationships have demonstrated great resiliency. They have survived in both periods of relatively tense U.S./Soviet relations and at times of political unrest within each of the blocs.

It seems clear that nations on both sides of the East-West border in central Europe see important reasons for continuing to press for improved relations. They benefit greatly from the rich set of economic ties that have developed over the years. And improved East-West relations have made possible a loosening of control in many East European countries which not only has meant easier access for families and individuals across borders, but also greater political and economic freedom within East European nations. Most importantly, national leaders on both sides of the ideological boundary in Europe fear that any war on the continent would inflict a huge cost, even if it did not escalate to the use of nuclear

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\* This paper is based on a discussion at the Institute for Defense Analyses on September 27, 1985. Participants included Barry Blechman, Harry Cochran, Dale Herspring, Robbin Laird, Barry Posen, Marc Smryl, and Victor Utgoff. The specific views expressed in this paper are not necessarily endorsed by each of these individuals.

weapons and the ultimate risks associated with their use. For this reason alone, the nations of Europe would support improved East-West relations with a fervor that far exceeds the enthusiasm of their respective great power allies.

Each side obviously understands the importance of central Europe to the other. They each also recognize that because of this mutual perception there is tremendous potential for any confrontation in the region to lead to war. This common understanding induces great caution by both blocs and is one reason why they both put such great value on developing cooperative relations between East and West. Virtually all national leaders in central Europe believe that the possibility of confrontation is far smaller in a politically cooperative environment; and, in fact, the history of the past twenty years suggests that this assumption is likely to be accurate.

On the other hand, the two blocs have not gained sufficient confidence in the political situation in Europe to reduce their military capabilities--either unilaterally or through negotiated agreements. They each deploy very large concentrations of ground and air forces in the region, equipped with a variety of conventional, chemical, and nuclear munitions. They each maintain vigorous weapon modernization programs in order to expand the capabilities of those forces. And they both have developed and exercise regularly the capability to mobilize additional forces rapidly and reinforce the units in the forward areas, should tensions increase suddenly.

Combined with their mutual perception of the vital character of the stakes in central Europe, it is the size of the military forces deployed there and the rapidity with which they could be expanded that implies the greatest dangers in the event of political unrest in central Europe. Because each side recognizes the dangers inherent in the situation, they each strive to maintain a lid on the political situation. Should such problems develop in any event, however, because of factors endemic to the region, each side could be expected--in certain situations--to mobilize and expand its forces relatively rapidly. They would do this either to influence the political situation that led to the confrontation, in response to such actions by the opponent, or perhaps in anticipation of such actions by the opposing side.

Under such conditions, the possibility of a war resulting from accidents or inadvertent incidents inevitably would increase. Moreover, it is in such situations that either side conceivably could misjudge the situation sufficiently to initiate a major conflict. Thus, to understand the pathway to U.S./Soviet conflict in central Europe, we must begin with the potential causes of local political unrest.



## PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS

Plausible scenarios for U.S./Soviet conflict in central Europe start inevitably with political unrest in eastern Europe. Looking out over the next ten years, such situations would seem likely to develop only in Poland. If one is willing to speculate about potential developments over a twenty year period, however, it is conceivable that political unrest might originate in East Germany as well.

### Poland

Poland is the most likely trouble spot in Europe over the near- to mid-term. Although the military regime appears to have gained control of the internal situation, and is acquiring a measure of legitimacy in the West, it has not by any means dealt with the underlying causes of unrest. A renewed downturn in the Polish economy could be one stimulus for new, spontaneous outbreaks of public opposition to the regime and, eventually, to revived underground political organizations. The slight revival of the Polish economy in recent years must be considered fragile; a sharp decline could easily result from continued stagnation of the Soviet and other East European economies combined with a new recession in the West. Heavy-handed tactics by the Polish government, particularly if it were directed in part against the Church or religious activities, also might spur new dissent. If repressive actions came against a background of new economic failures, they might set off a new cycle of demonstrations, violence, and bloodshed that appeared to be getting out of control.

In such circumstances, the Soviets could be expected first to repeat the tactics they attempted during 1980 and 1981, seeking to persuade the Polish government to deal forcefully with the situation. Thus, we would expect to see a string of military-to-military and party-to-party contacts, warning articles in the media, threats of a cut-off of key commodities, and eventually the mobilization and maneuvering of Red Army units in the bordering military districts of the U.S.S.R. and in East Germany. If these actions failed to induce Warsaw to act vigorously, or if the Polish government were simply unable to control the situation regardless of how hard it tried, it is possible--perhaps probable--that additional Soviet forces would be moved into Poland to squash public protests and restore order.

All else being equal, the U.S.S.R. clearly would prefer to avoid an intervention in Poland--even the appearance of overt pressure on the Polish government. If nothing else, such actions have adverse effects on Soviet objectives in western Europe; and a military

intervention could carry a high price in Poland itself to say nothing of a risk of catalyzing a major East-West conflict. Still, the strategic importance of Poland to Soviet planners is difficult to overestimate. It is the primary geographic buffer for Soviet security, as well as a crucial logistical link for any Soviet military operation in central Europe. Thus, in addition to the usual reasons why the U.S.S.R. abhors change in East Europe, particularly its concerns that the success of nationalist movements there might encourage nationality-based unrest in the Soviet Union itself, Poland is perceived with good reason by Soviet planners as having vital strategic importance necessitating its continued control by "reliable" governments.

For these reasons, in the event of new and sustained unrest in Poland, an overt Soviet intervention would be very plausible. The consequences of such an action would depend in the first instance on Polish reactions. If Soviet units were able to restore order quickly, without serious bloodshed, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the risks of a wider conflict would be slight. If there were resistance leading to prolonged fighting, the situation would probably still be contained, but under certain circumstances, the conflict in Poland could expand to include combat between Soviet and NATO armed forces.

It seems unlikely that the Polish army would be able to offer organized resistance to a Soviet intervention, even if it wished to. The current military regime is no doubt very thorough in assessing the loyalty of officers as they are promoted. Moreover, continued direct Soviet control of command arrangements and key personnel, to say nothing of necessary logistics, would be virtually certain under any circumstances. It is possible, however, that whole units and groups of individual soldiers, deserting with their weapons and supplies and vehicles on-hand, could present significant resistance--when combined with mass actions by civilians. Given what is known of the "Polish character," the determination of resistance which was demonstrated in 1956 and in 1980/81, to say nothing of deep and historic bitterness between Poles and Russians, such a strong reaction to the Soviet intervention might be more likely than not.

If past experience is a guide, conflict in Poland would not in itself lead to sympathy or "copy-cat" movements in other East European countries. If events had already created incipient conditions of unrest in those nations, however, or even in parts of the U.S.S.R. itself, the emergence of extended, open warfare between Soviet military units and Polish insurgents which seemed to be diverting Soviet attention and forces might lead to open violence elsewhere as well. Open and sustained uprisings in the Soviet Union itself would lead to such extraordinary international circumstances that all sorts of things would become

imaginable, including a major East-West conflict. Such a development in East Germany might also be particularly important in terms of the risk of a major East-West war, as is described in the second scenario below.

Short of triggering uprisings in additional countries, conflict within Poland would be unlikely to lead to East-West conflict, except under certain circumstances. If the fighting were severe and prolonged enough, it would be likely to stimulate massive flows of refugees seeking either to escape the bloodshed or to take advantage of the situation to emigrate to the West. Such groups moving overland into East Germany would likely be contained quickly by the GDR Army, although if the Polish difficulties had been accompanied by uprisings in East Germany, as mentioned above, the situation could become more complicated. (The large number of Polish "gastarbeiters" resident in the GDR also could confuse things.) In these latter cases, the Polish uprising would blend into the second scenario below as a potential source of East-West conflict.

Refugees seeking to escape from Poland via sea routes across the Baltic might be an independent source of clashes between Soviet and NATO military forces. One can imagine a variety of incidents involving Soviet naval units seeking to detain (or destroy) ships carrying Polish refugees and NATO naval units seeking to protect them and escort them to NATO ports. Attempted defections of Polish warships could be a particularly provocative source of incidents between NATO and Soviet naval forces. In all likelihood, any such incident would not lead to a wider conflict, but there would be a risk of escalation. These risks would stem primarily from the likelihood that if the Polish situation had already reached this level of confrontation, both NATO and Warsaw Pact forces are likely to have been placed in advanced stages of alert and could be receiving reinforcements.

Soviet forces, of course, would have been at least partially mobilized to deal with the uprising in Poland. While NATO nations would be likely to be cautious in taking countering moves, there might be considerable ambiguity in the situation; that is, the purpose of the Soviet mobilization need not be certain from the physical evidence of military preparations. In view of its vulnerability to a surprise attack when in its normal peacetime posture, simple prudence could dictate a NATO response. Moreover, NATO could not be confident that regardless of the reasons for its original actions, the Warsaw Pact might not be tempted in the wake of a victory in Poland--if NATO had not put up its guard--to deal with other problems. This latter might be a particular danger if there were problems also in Germany. Domestic political considerations might also suggest at least a partial mobilization. Bloodshed in Poland would lead to considerable pressure on the

American and some West European governments "to do something," or at least to give the appearance of doing something, to stop the Soviet intervention; mobilization might appear to be just the ticket to ease domestic pressures for even more aggressive policies.

In short, faced with military preparations on the part of Soviet forces in eastern Europe, NATO could well conclude that prudence required a matching increase in preparedness, even if an actual attack were considered unlikely. In a tense political environment, mutual large-scale mobilizations in a high stakes region like central Europe is intrinsically hazardous. Heightened military activity necessarily carries a risk of incidents. As forces are brought to higher stages of readiness, the rules of engagement which govern the actions of local commanders necessarily are loosened, making it more likely that accidental or inadvertent actions could lead to wider conflicts. In this sense, the situation in the Baltic might be particularly dangerous. Given the potential vulnerability of surface warships to a surprise attack, incidents stemming from seaborne refugees or Polish navy desertions could well be misinterpreted and lead to wider conflicts. And once a serious naval engagement took place in the Baltic, the potential for incidents between the U.S. and Soviet navies elsewhere in the world would not be insignificant.

If the situation heated up sufficiently, there would even be a possibility that one side or the other might come to the mistaken conclusion that the other side's preparations indicated that it had decided to launch an attack, or that it inevitably would reach such a decision in the near future. If the side reaching that conclusion also perceived substantial advantage in striking first, it conceivably might be tempted to launch a theaterwide preemptive offensive of its own.

### Germany

There is little reason to expect internal disorders in East Germany over the near- to mid-term. Over the longer term, however, one can postulate developments in both East and West Germany which could lead to a situation containing risks of U.S./Soviet conflict. The Soviet Union, of course, considers the continued division of Germany to be critical for stable political arrangements in Europe and for its own security. It would view any evidence of serious trends toward the unification of the two German states, or of the inability of the East German government to cope with popular movements that could lead to such trends, as cause for serious concern. Given the major troop concentrations in the two Germanies, a Soviet intervention in the GDR could carry substantial risks of triggering an East-West conflict.

Let us suppose that trends in relations between East and West Germany, evident for the past ten to fifteen years, continued for the remainder of the century: The two sides continued to expand their economic relations, political cooperation and diplomatic exchanges deepened, and visits and other forms of exchanges and communications between individual Germans and between private organizations on different sides of the border continued to increase. Although Soviet leaders have expressed some uneasiness about this growing relationship, they have tolerated it, with the exception of rare incidents, for a number of reasons. Foremost among these is the U.S.S.R.'s own economic difficulties; economic growth in East Germany, believed by Soviet leaders to be a prerequisite for continued political stability in that country, depends on close relations with the West. (The Soviets also benefit from the greater access to western technology which goes along with benevolent East/West German relations.) Moreover, Soviet objectives in western Europe generally--particularly their desire to induce difficulties between the U.S. and European governments and eventually to bring about the removal of American military power from Europe--are far better served in a context in which the Soviet control of eastern Europe and potential threat to the West are downplayed, rather than being highly visible.

At some point, however, Soviet leaders could decide that they had to act to intervene to stem these trends. Soviet officials might have become concerned about developments in West Germany and feared that they had to diminish the intra-German relationship as means of discouraging their continuation (see below). Or Soviet officials might simply have reached the conclusion that the trend toward closer intra-German relations had gone too far, that it was encouraging expectations that the two countries would eventually be reunited. Soviet leaders might even have come to believe, correctly or incorrectly, that a plot to bring about reunification was underway. Unrest elsewhere in East Europe also might encourage a Soviet decision that it had to deal decisively with the situation. If, for example, the Soviets had decided to intervene in Poland, they might believe it desirable to establish a more reliable government in East Germany prior to the event.

Regardless of the reason for the Soviet decision, for the scenario to be plausible, the East German government would have had to have resisted prior Soviet blandishments to curb their relationship with the West, as well as various forms of diffuse political and economic pressures. There might even have been a specific incident--say a refusal on the part of East German leaders to bow to a specific Soviet demand; for example, a refusal to cancel a planned common celebration with West German leaders of the anniversary of an

event in German history with nationalistic overtones. At the current time, it is inconceivable that the East German government would permit things to get so far out of hand. But we are discussing a situation some fifteen years in the future, when it would be at least imaginable that the gradual evolution of relations among West and East Germany and the Soviet Union had created such new realities.

We thus postulate a Soviet decision early in the next century to intervene in East Germany to impose a new government committed to restraining relations with the West. Would such an action trigger an uprising? Probably not, at least not immediately, unless it were handled particularly clumsily and resulted in fighting between insurgent units and military forces or security units that remained loyal to the old regime. More likely, unlike the Polish situation, the Army would support the Soviet demand and, in fact, the use of Soviet troops might not even be necessary. Over time, however, the move could lead to domestic unrest, political organizing, work slow-downs, and sporadic protests in East Germany which--eventually--could result in wholesale violence and the use of Soviet ground forces in support of East German units to suppress the protests. Such developments would be more likely if the new GDR government clamped down on access to the West or if, in reaction to the intervention, the West greatly diminished economic ties to East Germany and this led eventually to hardships.

While these events appear fairly far-fetched in 1985, their likelihood could be increased by political developments in the FRG. The next West German elections are scheduled for 1987. Either a reelected CDU/FDP government or a new SPD government would be likely to follow similar policies toward the East: seeking, within self-imposed boundaries to avoid provoking the Soviets, to develop closer ties with the GDR across the spectrum of relationships, with particular emphasis on economic ties and greater access for individuals across the inter-German border. The two types of governments would differ in their belief in the possibility of cooperative political initiatives, and perhaps in tactics and styles, but either could be expected to place a very high priority on deepening ties between the two Germanies.

Any West German government elected in 1987 also could be expected to remain a strong supporter of NATO and closely allied with the United States. As time goes on, however, there is considerable potential for conflict between the U.S. and FRG over East-West policies broadly defined, and particularly over such specific issues as technology transfers, arms control, and deployments of nuclear weapons in Europe. These security issues in U.S.-FRG relations might be aggravated, perhaps overshadowed, by economic

conflicts, particularly if protectionist sentiment gains substantially in this country. If these conflicts were accompanied by a weak performance of the West German economy--and particularly if unemployment remained near its current unprecedentedly high levels, or worsened--there would be considerable potential for worsening tensions between the United States and the Federal Republic and for the emergence within West Germany of a growing political movement demanding a more independent West German stance vis-a-vis the United States and NATO overall. Such a movement might not renounce West Germany's current security arrangements initially, but could emphasize the need to develop indigenous FRG armaments industries and more independent ways of thinking--for both economic and military reasons. It might also emphasize Germany's unique interests as compared to those of its European and North American allies. And it might become increasingly outspoken concerning the ultimate desirability of reuniting the two parts of Germany in one sovereign entity--perhaps as part of an international arrangement which guaranteed the country's neutrality.

There are strains of sympathy for such a foreign policy stance in West German opinion already. If international and national events were complementary, and if the movements leaders were shrewd and effective, it could become a serious contender for power in Bonn over the course of the next fifteen years. While it would be unlikely that such a movement could gain control of the Bonn government as an independent political party before the end of the century, it is conceivable that a charismatic leader espousing such policies might take over leadership of the CDU in a shorter period of time. Alternatively, a party expressing these views might become a junior partner with the CDU in a coalition government some time in the 1990s. Indeed, any one of these potential political developments, combined with trends in East Germany previously described, might be sufficient to persuade Soviet leaders that they had to act immediately to gain control of the situation in Germany before it got out of hand.

Political developments in the FRG like these are not required to imagine East-West conflict in central Europe resulting from unrest in the GDR. Absent such developments, a Soviet intervention in East Germany would still be plausible in a variety of circumstances. And in such an event, one could expect a countermobilization by NATO and the sort of intrinsic risk of accidental or inadvertent conflict described for the Polish situation. As noted, such dangers would be greater in the German case, because of the closer physical proximity of the fighting to NATO forces, the greater likelihood of refugees from the fighting entering, or attempting to enter, western territory, and similar reasons. The

emergence of a powerful nationalist movement in the FRG, however, would both increase the likelihood of a Soviet intervention in the GDR and raise the prospect of two additional means by which such a conflict could lead to a major East-West war.

If the government of the Federal Republic were controlled by the leaders of the nationalist movement, and if relations between the FRG and the United States had already been strained, the Bonn government might act far more aggressively in support of its countrymen across the border than the U.S. might prefer. Exactly how aggressively they might act would depend in part on how far the estrangement between the U.S. and the FRG had proceeded. At the extreme of the period (2005) it is conceivable that West Germany might have withdrawn its troops from the NATO command. If the crisis in central Europe were to result in a U.S./Soviet conflict, this extreme action would have had to be accomplished without causing the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Germany, however. (Indeed, the Soviet response to the withdrawal of German troops from NATO could be sufficient to trigger a crisis in central Europe.)

Conceivably, covert operations sponsored by a nationalistic Bonn government estranged from the United States might have been partly responsible for the problems in East Germany which triggered the postulated Soviet intervention. Moreover, once violence between Soviet troops and citizens began in East Germany, an independently minded Bonn government with sole control of its own forces might decide upon rules of engagement which gave local commanders a fair amount of flexibility in deciding whether to assist refugees and, if so, how to accomplish the assistance. The assignment of such authority to commanders of units on the border could make isolated clashes between Soviet and West German military units more likely.

If Bonn felt that the United States were not acting aggressively enough to aid the East Germans, it would have a number of options to try to force the Americans' hands. If NATO delayed its mobilization, for example, FRG forces could be mobilized outside the NATO structure, a move which the Soviets would no doubt find extremely provocative. In an extreme situation, say one in which the East German Army were disintegrating and Bonn came to believe that there was a real prospect of a western victory, FRG units might stage deliberate attacks against Soviet units near the border in the hope of creating a situation in which Soviet forces might be compelled either to attack the West or to withdraw from the GDR under some political formula which ostensibly protected their interests.



Soviet leaders might come to see the situation in central Europe as a last desperate opportunity to reverse what had been decades of adverse global trends. We have already postulated that the Soviet position in eastern Europe had deteriorated throughout the remainder of the century, leading to considerable unrest in both Poland and East Germany and obvious dissatisfaction in other countries as well. Strains of this discontent may well have become visible within the U.S.S.R. itself, leading to spontaneous outbreaks of nationalist demonstrations and economic protests. As we have noted, the situation in West Germany had led to the emergence of a nationalistic government with independent armed forces; Soviet leaders could forecast that the development of German nuclear forces could not be far off. Perhaps, in addition, the withdrawal of the FRG from the unified NATO command had led to the withdrawal of substantial numbers of American troops from the continent, although not the entire American presence. We might further assume that the Soviets also faced a worsening situation in Asia, with an increasingly modern and better armed China working closely with a re-arming Japan to pose severe threats to Soviet interests.

East Germany and Poland, concerned that this action might further solidify the nationalists' hold on West Germany, creating even greater problems in the long term, as well as encouraging the reemergence of a healthy western alliance, Soviet leaders conceivably could decide to "go for broke." Moving into the GDR in force, mobilizing as quickly and as extensively as possible, Soviet leaders would watch NATO's reaction closely. If NATO appeared to be indecisive, and particularly if the alliance did not take certain military preparations, and if Soviet troops gained relatively quick control of the dissident areas, Soviet officials could decide to attempt a quick strike against the FRG with the purpose of reuniting Germany under their occupation and control. Such a scenario must of course be considered very unlikely, given the risks inherent in any major East-West war. Under the twin perceptions of a deteriorating long-term prospect, however, but an opportunity for a decisive victory as a result of immediate action, it retains some plausibility. In effect, Soviet leaders conceivably would act on the expectation that if they moved quickly and were triumphant against front-line German forces, in view of the strains which had emerged in U.S. relations with the FRG and the latter's role in triggering the crisis, the United States would choose to remain out of the fighting. If this judgment proved incorrect, a major East-West war would have begun in central Europe.

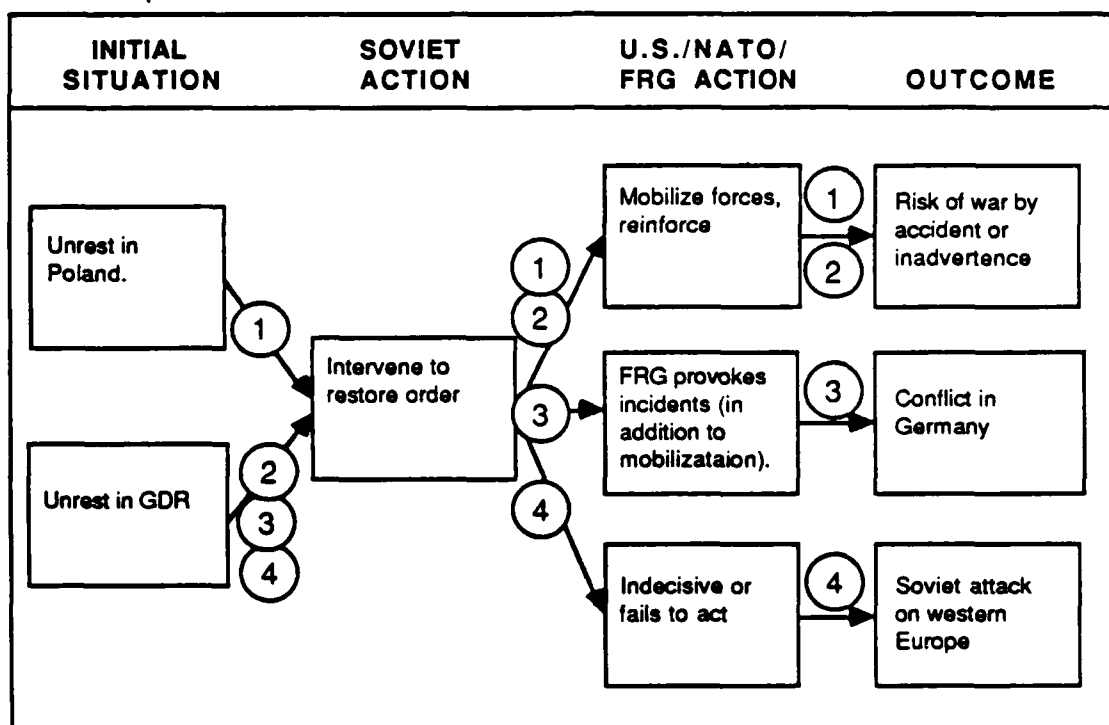
## **IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

It is interesting how radical the changes in political circumstances one must construct to imagine a war between East and West in central Europe. Because the two sides recognize the each other's great stakes in the region, as well as the tremendous destructive potential of the military forces deployed in Europe, or destined for a war on the continent, to say nothing of the links between conflicts in Europe and each side's central nuclear forces, the situation would appear indeed to be very stable. Imagining the outbreak of conflict, therefore, requires the postulation of political circumstances so greatly revised that a decision to initiate a major attack gains credibility, as in the scenario above.

In the discussion of central Europe, participants dismissed the possibility that disorders in Hungary or Czechoslovakia might lead to East-West conflict. Nor could they imagine, looking ahead twenty years, either Warsaw Pact aggression against the West nor a revanchist West German attack on the East, apart from the demanding circumstances described in the previous scenarios.

## **PATHWAYS TO U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT**

Analysis of this discussion reveals four generic pathways to U.S./Soviet conflict in central Europe, as depicted in the attached figure. Readers should note that potential pathways which do not lead to conflict are not included on the chart.



**Figure H-1. Pathways to U.S.-Soviet Conflict, Central Europe**

Each pathway begins with unrest in East Europe, either in Poland or the GDR, or both. Each includes as a first step a Soviet intervention to end the unrest and regain control of the situation. The sequences of events at that point would depend primarily upon the political situation in West Germany, the quality of relations within the western alliance, Soviet perceptions of their long-term strategic situation, and the specific military actions taken by NATO in response to the Soviet intervention.

### LINKS TO OTHER REGIONS

Because of its centrality to the U.S./Soviet competition, central Europe is linked to all other regions of the globe. The development of a serious confrontation in central Europe would make more likely the emergence of warfare in any other region that contained U.S. and Soviet military forces. In other words, once war broke out between the main portions of the two sides' military forces, it should be expected to become global in scope. There is also the possibility that potential aggressors in regional situations, currently restrained by the threat of great power intervention--e.g., North Korea--could

view the emergence of a major great power war in Europe as the perfect opportunity to take advantage of its local situation.

At the same time, each side retains the possibility of compensating for its weaknesses in other regional situations by raising the prospect of confrontation in central Europe. The region is thus indeed central to the U.S./Soviet competition; war in central Europe is both the potential source and the potential consequence of U.S./Soviet confrontation anywhere in the world.

A more specific linkage exists between the situation in central Europe and those in northern and southern Europe, however. If political conditions developed in central Europe such that a war appeared to become a real possibility, each side could be expected to seek more advantageous military positions on the region's northern and southern flanks. Maneuvering for position in the north might be particularly dangerous in terms of the risk of U.S./Soviet conflict, as is described in the Appendix covering that region.

**Appendix I**

**NORTHERN EUROPE**

## U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS

### Appendix I. NORTHERN EUROPE\*

Northern Europe is one of the most stable regions of the world. Each of the countries in the region--Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the U.S.S.R.--are well-established polities unthreatened by revolutionary change or serious internal unrest. Except the last, all of these countries also have long traditions of peaceful and democratic politics and broadly legitimated means of accommodating social and political dissent. Again excepting the U.S.S.R., the nations of the region are also relatively prosperous and can look forward to continued economic growth in the future. Both economics and politics suggest that the stability of the region is likely to persist.

Relations among the nations of the region are also well established and generally peaceful. The democratic nations maintain a rich set of relationships among themselves, not only on the governmental level, but also among like-minded political parties, business enterprises, and other private organizations. Consultations are frequent, common initiatives frequently discussed, coordination of policies more often the rule than the exception. Relationships between the Soviet Union and the democratic nations are not nearly so extensive, but even here, a set of formal treaties and tacit understandings have been developed over the years which permit relations between the U.S.S.R. and the other states in the region to be handled most often in a businesslike fashion and with little tension, if not real cordiality.

This is not to say that the region is without problems. There are historic enmities--between Swedes and Norwegians and Swedes and Finns, on the one hand, and between Russians and Finns and Russians and Swedes, on the other--which are not too far below the surface.

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\* This paper is based on a discussion at the Institute for Defense Analyses on October 22, 1985. Participants included Barry Blechman, Douglas Hart, Robbin Laird, Maryann Leighton, Peter Soverell, Marc Smyrl, Victor Utgoff, and Robert Weinland. The specific views expressed in the paper are not necessarily endorsed by each of these individuals.

There are also lingering territorial disputes in the region, most importantly involving Norway and the Soviet Union. The two countries disputed control of the Svalbard Archipelago for years, a dispute which apparently was ended with the Spitzbergen Treaty of 1920. The treaty, signed by 39 nations, gives Norway control over the Archipelago, yet prohibits "warlike" activities on the islands, and gives the other original signatories rights to carry out mining and other commercial activities in the area.

The Soviet Union has demanded revision of the treaty on occasion, and on other occasions has carried out activities there that seemed to question the ban on military activity. There is also a Soviet community on the island which is ostensibly committed to coal-mining, but which is clearly far larger than would be required if that were the sole purpose of the settlement. Norway and the U.S.S.R. also dispute the division of rights to exploit the seabed resources along the continental shelf in the Barents Sea, a problem which has been temporarily resolved by creating a so-called "Grey Zone" in the region, but which is periodically challenged, most often by the Soviet side.

The region is heavily militarized. The Soviet Northern Fleet, its most powerful and modern naval component, is based primarily on the Kola Peninsula and depends for access to the Atlantic Ocean on free passage through the Barents and Norwegian Seas. The Northern Fleet includes more than one-half of the U.S.S.R.'s modern nuclear-armed missile submarines--presumably that nation's strategic reserve in the event of a major conflict with the United States. The United States maintains no military bases in the region, but would have access to bases in Norway in the event of a NATO contingency and has predeployed equipment in that country for such eventualities. U.S. warships and submarines are frequent visitors to these northern waters, and NATO exercises, sometimes of major proportions, are carried out there on a regular basis. Norway and Sweden also maintain modern armed forces of substantial capabilities. In recent years, there have been frequent incidents involving the penetration by submarines and sometimes surface ships of Norwegian and Swedish territorial waters. Most often, the nationality of the intruder is unknown, at least publicly, but in several of the more prominent incidents--notably, the grounding of a submarine near a sensitive Swedish naval facility in 1981--the trespassing vessel was known to be of Soviet origin. The nations of the region have sought generally to avoid the development of international tensions over these incidents, but they have inflamed popular passions at times and have been used by conservative parties and politicians to advantage.

For several reasons--importantly, but not exclusively, concerning the potential naval battle for control of the Atlantic--northern Europe would be of great strategic significance in the event of a war in central Europe. As a consequence, during any crisis that appeared to be heading toward such a conflict, each side could be expected to jockey for advantageous military position. The situation is such that there could be great advantage in acting preemptively, and would thus be unstable once each side--in the context of gathering war clouds elsewhere in Europe--began to fear that the other might be considering a hostile initiative. Thus, although northern Europe, given its stability, would be unlikely to provide the political basis of any U.S./Soviet military conflict, it could, in the event of a serious crisis elsewhere, and particularly in central Europe, provide the spark which led either to the initiation of fighting between the two sides or to a major escalation of a low-level conflict that had begun elsewhere in the world. These possibilities are spelled out further in the scenarios below.

### PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS

Let us assume that for a variety of reasons, over several years, U.S./Soviet relations had deteriorated so substantially that there had been a string of crises and confrontations in various parts of the world. There may already have been direct clashes between U.S. and Soviet military units, although the prior initiation of direct military conflict between the two sides would not be a prerequisite for the scenario described below. Let us further assume that the competition between the two nations in strategic armaments had continued and accelerated between the present and the time of this crisis, that there were no longer any effective arms control regime, and that a wide-open offense/defense arms race were underway. Let us assume finally that at the same time that the Soviets faced serious unrest in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland and the German Democratic Republic, the United States found itself increasingly estranged from an assertive, nationalistic government in the Federal Republic (see Appendix H on central Europe for details).

As such a scenario unfolded, the two sides would inevitably begin to think more seriously about the prospect of war. And in such circumstances, both nations (and their respective allies) would begin to contemplate actions which would be of considerable military benefit but which they had avoided in more normal times because of their adverse political consequences. In short, as the risk of war became more plausible, each side's calculus of risks and benefits would change and with it their willingness to take chances.



Some of these recalculations could have a direct effect on the situation in northern Europe and, with it, increase the risk of war.

One early target might be Svalbard. As noted, the Soviets already have made claims to the islands and maintain a "settlement" of questionable legitimacy there. It would be a relatively easy matter, assuming the advantage of surprise, for them to seize one or more of the islands in the archipelago. The Soviet action might be intended to expand the Soviet air defense periphery. Particularly if the United States had emphasized the deployment of sea-based cruise missiles prior to the crisis, the U.S.S.R. might see military benefit in strengthening its defenses against such weapons in the Northern Fleet operating area. Seizure of Svalbard, which in normal circumstances would be considered unwise, as it would undoubtedly stimulate tremendous opposition to the U.S.S.R. in Western Europe generally, and in Scandinavia in particular, might seem prudent in the circumstances we have sketched above.

The seizure of Svalbard, if it were the first significant territorial infringement or overtly hostile act, would be unlikely itself to stimulate an immediate direct military response by NATO. Norwegian forces, in conjunction with troops from the U.S. and other alliance states, might stage a counterattack on the island, but that would not likely be the initial response. There is some history to the dispute, after all, and NATO would be unprepared and no doubt reluctant to risk war immediately. A more likely first response would be the activation of contingency plans to reinforce northern and central Norway with tactical aircraft and ground units from other NATO countries. Air bases in northern Norway in particular could be of great benefit in a major war in Europe; their early reinforcement could help to deter or defeat an attack on the bases by Soviet forces early in the war, as well as provide advantages to the West in the opening phases of the war.

The Soviets could be expected to respond by mobilizing additional forces and moving tactical air and missile units to the Kola Peninsula. The basing infrastructure in this region is not used to nearly its capacity in normal times; the Soviets clearly plan on its early reinforcement. At this point, there might be a natural denouement in the crisis. As yet, there had not been direct clashes between significant military forces nor unambiguous territorial violations. The two sides might realize the gravity of the situation and reach a political accommodation of indefinite duration. Alternatively, if such a negotiation were unsuccessful--or if events elsewhere, say, continued uprisings in central Europe, forced the hands of the two sides--the situation could continue to escalate.

It is impossible to forecast whether the Soviets would deliberately initiate a war with an attack on northern Europe. On the one hand, Soviet strategy as articulated publicly appears to be predicated on a quick conventional victory on the central front, hopefully without recourse to nuclear weapons. Any military initiatives in the north would thus seem to be undertaken only in support of a major offensive in Germany. To do otherwise might tip their hand, thus provoking actions by NATO in the center region that could spoil the prospects for a quick Soviet victory. On the other hand, the Soviets conceivably could decide in some acute European crisis that the most efficient course would be to fracture the alliance. An attack in the north, aimed at neutralizing NATO's northern airfields and disrupting U.S. supply lines to Europe could be seen by Soviet strategists as a means of coercing the alliance, thus achieving their objectives without fighting a likely bloody, and possibly disastrous, war in central Europe. Such a northern offensive might include attacks on NATO bases in northern Norway, perhaps with chemical weapons, attacks against NATO naval assets in the Barents and Norwegian Seas, and actions to seize the entrances to the Baltic. If these initial forays were successful, the Soviets might eventually attempt to seize major portions of the Norwegian coastline from which they could project air and naval power into the Atlantic.

It may be assumed that NATO, as a defensive alliance, would not initiate the conflict in the north. The alliance would have little to gain, and potentially a great deal to lose, by curtailing a crisis by triggering a war, particularly with an attack in the north.

In the event of a major crisis in Europe, though, the situation in the north would imply risks of U.S./Soviet conflict whether or not either side decided deliberately to initiate a war. If NATO began to move forces into Norway, the Soviets might well move ground forces into Finland. They are permitted to do so under the terms of the Russo-Finnish Treaty under certain conditions; NATO's reinforcement of the bases in northern Norway would no doubt provide as much justification as the Soviets might consider necessary. Such a step itself would again be unlikely to trigger open conflict between U.S. and Soviet military units, as NATO maintains no commitment to Finland and such a Soviet action would not be unexpected.

The situation in the north at this point would be explosive, however. The region would have been heavily "militarized" within a relatively short time. The buffers between the forces of the great powers would have been more or less removed and a direct confrontation established. They each would have deployed very valuable assets in a relatively confined area. There would be numerous opportunities for accidental or

inadvertent clashes between aircraft and warships of the two sides, as they each maintained a vigilant posture, with active surveillance and reconnaissance operations in support of a very nervous political leadership. The most serious danger would be that routine activity by one side would be misinterpreted by the other as indicative of more ominous preparations, and that such a misperception would lead to hostile initiatives either in the north or in other regions.

A special problem could be suggested by submarine operations in northern waters. As noted, the U.S.S.R. bases a substantial portion of its strategic and attack submarine fleets in the north. At present, they depend largely on a "sanctuary" strategy to protect these strategic assets, which are considered to be most importantly a reserve force for intra-war or post-war negotiations. Because of the long range of the missiles on these submarines, they can be operated in the Norwegian and Barents Seas and still target locations in virtually all of the United States. In these sanctuaries, the submarines are protected by Soviet surface and sub-surface forces.

In the crisis situation previously described, it is likely that the United States would become even more anxious to monitor the activities of Soviet strategic submarines than it is in normal times. Toward this end, the U.S. might send unusually large numbers of attack submarines into the sanctuaries, permit them to operate closer to Soviet bases and home waters than they are normally permitted, and even direct them to harass Soviet submarines as means of signaling that it had not been intimidated by the Soviet actions in Svalbard and Finland and was prepared, if it came to that, for war.

At this point, a number of things might happen:

1. The Soviets might interpret the movement of substantial numbers of U.S. submarines into these waters as evidence of final U.S. preparations for war and decide to strike first in central Europe and in northern Europe, as previously described, while simultaneously attacking the submarines and other Western naval forces in the region. If the Soviets were nervous about the vulnerability of their land-based strategic forces, particularly ICBMs, or believed that the U.S. had significant strategic defensive capabilities, they would perceive more reason to strike in Europe while their central nuclear forces were still intact and presumably capable of deterring a U.S. nuclear attack on Soviet territory. While any such Soviet move would obviously be born only in desperation, the scenario does postulate that the events in Europe were occurring against a background of multiple crises around the world, an accelerating strategic competition, and a deteriorating Soviet position in Eastern Europe. In short, the Soviets would be in desperate straits; they might

therefore interpret the U.S. attack submarine movements as a final signal that they had better preempt before the West struck first.

2. Foreseeing the deployment of U.S. attack submarines in their home waters, or upon detecting the first of the U.S. submarines entering the region, the Soviets might declare an "exclusionary zone" covering the Barents Sea and, perhaps, other northern waters. If the U.S. persisted, as it would do almost certainly, the Soviets might attack and sink one or more U.S. submarines. This would likely bring an American retaliation of some sort and the possibility of triggering a major conflict.
3. Any sort of submarine operation of this sort would carry some risk of accidental or inadvertent sinkings. Communications alone greatly complicate the mechanics of submarine operations. Each side would have less control over its forces and less complete information about what was going on. Accidental losses might be interpreted as losses to hostile action, for example; the possibilities are endless. Although in most circumstances such incidents might remain isolated; in the context described here, the risks of escalation would be grave.

An alternative scenario would envision similar actions with regard to U.S. carriers in the Norwegian Sea. In the circumstances described here, the Soviets would be likely to step up surveillance of high-value U.S. naval forces and perhaps carry out harassment operations. In response, or anticipation, the United States might declare "keep-out zones" around the carriers, in which any intruder would be attacked. If the Soviets violated the zone, the trespassing ship or aircraft might very well be sunk. If the Soviets retaliated with major attacks on U.S. naval forces, the U.S. would be tempted to strike naval facilities and maritime air bases on the Kola Peninsula. The potential for further escalation would be great. The main difference between these scenarios and those involving submarines is that the information of the two sides would presumably be better concerning surface operations and there would be somewhat less likelihood of accidental conflict. The risk of miscalculation, of called bluffs and counter-bluffs, would still be present, however.

### **IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS**

There have also been discussions of U.S./Soviet conflict beginning with the Soviet-Norwegian dispute over the "Grey Zone," with incidents in the Baltic Sea, perhaps related to the Polish crisis, and with incidents involving the submarines of the two sides in normal peacetime circumstances. In none of these cases, however, does there appear to be a plausible pathway to direct and significant clashes between U.S. and Soviet military units.

## **PATHWAYS TO U.S./SOVIET CONFLICT**

Once we assume the international crisis leading to the general situation in northern Europe and the steps by both sides to militarize the region, there are essentially five pathways to U.S./Soviet conflict, as depicted in Figure I-1. Each begins with interactions between naval forces.

## **LINKAGES TO OTHER REGIONS**

As noted, the situation in northern Europe would be linked most directly to the situation in central Europe. It is virtually impossible to imagine the activities described here in the absence of a tense and deteriorating situation along the central front. The region would also be linked to other regions throughout the world in an indirect way, insofar as events in these regions contributed to the general build-up of tensions and strategic competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. In particular, it would be virtually certain that any action directed at Soviet strategic submarines in northern European waters would be replicated against Soviet strategic submarines in the northwest Pacific. There may be a comparable link between Soviet actions directed against U.S. aircraft carriers in the two regions.

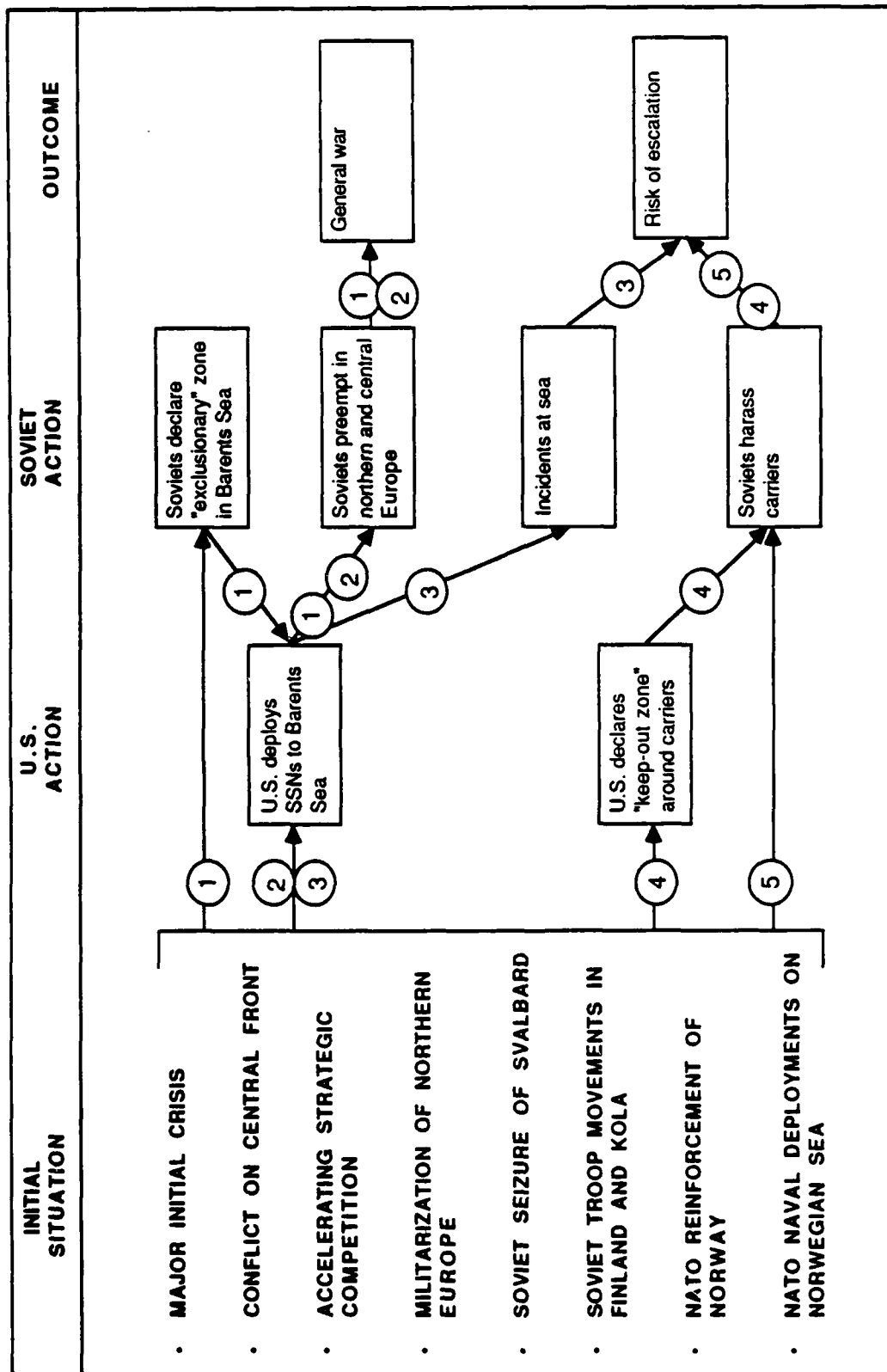


Figure I-1. Pathways to U.S.-Soviet Conflict, Northern Europe

**Appendix J**

**CENTRAL AMERICA**

## U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS

### Appendix J. CENTRAL AMERICA\*

U.S.-Soviet military conflict in Central America is very unlikely. Even looking into the 1990s, the U.S.S.R. will be so disadvantaged relative to the United States in terms of capabilities to sustain large-scale combat activity in the Western Hemisphere that Soviet leaders are likely to seek assiduously to avoid confrontations while pursuing their goals through covert and indirect means. It is possible that over a considerable period of time, deteriorating local conditions coupled with political developments in both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. and, perhaps, ideosyncratic events in the region itself, might lead to a confrontation between the great powers with a possibility of violent incidents between their armed forces. Even so, such events are more likely to lead to sporadic and isolated incidents involving maritimes forces and, perhaps, sustained U.S.-Soviet conflict in other regions, than to sustained fighting in the Western Hemisphere.

#### PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS

In the near term, conflict between U.S. and Soviet military forces in the Western Hemisphere is conceivable as a result of a U.S. military action directed at Cuba or Nicaragua in response to an attack in this hemisphere by a terrorist organization supported by those countries which resulted in large numbers of American deaths. Over the longer term, one could imagine certain sequences of events which could lead to U.S.-Soviet armed conflict related to an insurgency elsewhere in Central America. In either case, however, the plausibility of the scenario would have to be considered slim.

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\* This paper is based on a discussion at the Institute for Defense Analyses on September 5, 1985. Participants included Barry Blechman, Paul Gorman, Paul Hanafin, Robbin Laird, B. E. Trainor, Jiri Valenta, and Robert Vickers. The specific views expressed in this paper are not necessarily endorsed by each of these individuals.



## **1. Longer-Term Scenarios:**

Realistically, confrontations between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. in the Western Hemisphere are unlikely unless events over a long period created a series of misperceptions and miscalculations by the two sides that led to an inadvertent crisis. These events would reflect both internal conditions in the U.S. and U.S.S.R. and developments in the region itself. Essentially, confrontation in Central America appears unlikely unless Soviet leaders perceived an opportunity (and reason) to make a major strategic gain in the region without undue risk, a perception which turned out to have been in error. Given the overwhelming U.S. military superiority in the hemisphere and its longstanding sensitivity and frequent strong responses to evidence of overt Soviet meddling in the region, the emergence of such a Soviet misperception appears unlikely. Still, we have detailed such a scenario below. The specific events hypothesized are unimportant; analytically, what matters is the interaction between the deteriorating situation in the region and U.S. politics, and its consequences for Soviet and U.S. behavior.

### **Background Events in the Region**

Let us assume that Soviet- and Cuban-backed left-wing forces in Central America began to make substantial gains in the later part of the decade.

- (1) Despite its recent gains, most observers believe that the odds that the Contra movement will topple the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua are relatively small. Conceivably, by the end of the decade the movement would falter and fail. Having consolidated its hold on Nicaragua, the Sandinistas might then deal strongly with those internal critics in the church, press, and business sector that had remained aloof from the Contras, and establish an unambiguous Cuban-style regime in Nicaragua. With Cuban support, they might then devote greater attention to spreading the revolution elsewhere in Central America.
- (2) As a result, the tempo of fighting between leftist rebels and government forces in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras might rise substantially. In Salvador, particularly, the possibility of a take-over would be high, and by the end of the decade the rebels might be more or less in control of the countryside, and in a position to stage major offensives against government forces. The Nicaraguan armed forces--trained, advised, and often led by the Cubans--might increasingly cross into Honduras and Costa Rica, ostensibly in pursuit of the remnants of the Contras, but in fact to aid left-wing rebels. Border incidents involving the Honduran armed forces and American-trained

Costa Rican paramilitary forces might become commonplace; U.S. servicemen advising these government forces might be killed in some of these incidents.

- (3) Under the continued leadership of Fidel Castro (or that of his brother and designated successor, Raul Castro), Cuba might grow increasingly bold in support of the Nicaraguans and other left-wing insurgents in the Caribbean and Central America. Cubans could play major advisory roles in each of the revolutionary movements and carry out a variety of combat-support missions for the Nicaraguan forces--command and control, air defense, transportation, and logistics. They may well make available advanced air defense systems and combat aircraft--said to be intended for air defense--to the Nicaraguan armed forces, as well as modern patrol craft, some armed with short-range surface-to-surface missiles.
- (4) Over time, in addition to underwriting this advanced military equipment (and some of the training to enable Nicaraguans to use it), the U.S.S.R. might begin to play a more overt role in Nicaragua than it has in the first half of the 1980s. Soviet equipment might be airlifted directly to Nicaragua rather than trans-shipped through Cuba. Soviet naval vessels might begin to call regularly at Nicaraguan ports, especially Corinto on the Pacific coast and Bluefields on the Caribbean. (Both ports have been improved substantially.) Eventually, concern might arise in the U.S. intelligence community that facilities associated with the servicing of submarines and their armaments may be under construction at Bluefields. Also, Soviet long-range aircraft might begin to use improved airfields at Punta Huerte. A detachment of these aircraft might be based at San Antonio de los Banos airfield near Havana to fly reconnaissance missions off the U.S. east and west coasts, staging from east to west through Punta Huerte.

### **Perceptions and Roles of the Great Powers**

This scenario hinges on a series of U.S. and U.S.S.R. miscalculations about each other's resolve and likely next steps in an escalating crisis. Such events as those described below could lead to this type of mutual misperceptions.

Key would be a pattern of U.S. behavior which led Soviet and Cuban leaders to believe that they had wide latitude for offensive operations in the region. Even if the United States maintained its current level of diplomatic and economic support--and limited military support--for existing Central American governments, and its rhetorical and sometimes diplomatic opposition to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, a failure to act decisively in response to the escalating pattern of Nicaraguan, Cuban, and Soviet military activity described in the previous section could contribute to such conclusions. Although

no one action by the Cubans or Soviets might be sufficiently unique to trigger such a change in beliefs, the cumulative pattern over a substantial period of time (say, five years) might be sufficient to persuade Cuba and/or the U.S.S.R. that new objective circumstances had been created in which they could act more freely to oppose American interests. Signs of internal preoccupations in the United States--the results, for example, of a new economic downturn or of a political stalemate in the wake of the second Reagan Administration--could encourage such perceptions further. Indeed, the failure of the left-wing successes in Central America described in the previous section to precipitate a strong political reaction in the United States and, in response, action by the administration, could be a critical sign to the United States adversaries that they were at a juncture in which they had greater latitude to act more aggressively.

Similarly, this scenario might be more likely if the Soviet Union made progress toward the solution of its own domestic problems in the latter part of the 1980s. If Mikhail Gorbachev were able to consolidate power rapidly, and then to implement major changes in the Soviet economy which led to rapid economic growth and a more positive outlook by Soviet elites, it is more likely that the U.S.S.R. would be in a position to support an assertive foreign policy. Relative success in those policies toward Western Europe, China, and Japan would also contribute to Soviet confidence and to a material situation in which the Soviets could take greater risks of alienating the United States.

Progress, or the lack thereof, in the Afghan War might also bear on Soviet willingness to challenge the U.S. in Central America; the influence of this factor, however, is unclear. If, on the one hand, the Soviets increasingly appear to dominate the country with fewer casualties and lower costs, it might also contribute to the sense of confidence which would seem to be a necessary prerequisite for aggressive actions in the Western Hemisphere. Continuing problems in Afghanistan, on the other hand, could lead to a sense of desperation--a perceived need to take even risky actions to terminate the problem. If the Afghan Mujaheddin's continued successes were seen to depend heavily on U.S. covert support, Soviet leaders conceivably might launch an offensive in Central America as a means of gaining leverage on the United States to force a curtailment of such assistance. (The Soviets also of course would have the option of seeking more directly to curtail U.S. aid--by putting pressure on Pakistan.)

## **Precipitating Soviet Actions**

The immediate crisis might be precipitated by a specific Soviet action intended to take advantage of what appeared to be a passive U.S. attitude toward the region. Two illustrations follow:

- (1) The Soviets might challenge U.S. military predominance in the region as well as seek to reverse earlier political defeats by introducing strategic weapons into Nicaragua that the U.S. had indicated previously it would consider unacceptable if they had been introduced into Cuba. The basing of ballistic missile submarines at Bluefields would be an example of such an action, as would the location of Backfire aircraft at Nicaraguan airfields. Under some circumstances (e.g., a NATO decision to expand its INF deployments beyond the 572 missiles agreed upon in 1979), the Soviet might consider installation of nuclear-armed, intermediate-range missiles in Nicaragua, as had been hinted in the early 1980s. Of course the provocation need not be as explicit as these examples. It might not be evident at first whether the submarines were based in Bluefields or only visiting temporarily (and availing themselves of certain port facilities). It might not be evident whether the Backfires were types assigned to Soviet Long Range Aviation and intended for offensive nuclear missions against targets on land or aircraft equipped and intended for anti-shipping missions and assigned to Soviet Naval Aviation.
- (2) The Soviets might encourage the Cubans, Nicaraguans, and client rebel movements in other Central American states to launch a major offensive intended to speed up the pace of revolutionary change. The offensive would be preceded by massive shipments of military equipment into the region and between Cuba and the Central American mainland. It might be accompanied by the destruction of U.S. reconnaissance or patrol aircraft (or patrolling warships) by Cuban- or Soviet-manned air defense units. It might also be accompanied by terrorist activity (e.g., Puerto Rican independence movement) against U.S. facilities and/or personnel in the region. In all cases, the offensive would clearly represent a new type of action in terms of the degree of coordination and Soviet direction that would be necessary for it to work.

Whatever the specifics of the Soviet action, it would be intended to accomplish two objectives: (a) If the U.S. did not react, to solidify the gains made during previous years by toppling additional Central American governments and/or solidifying the Soviet position in Nicaragua--just as it had previously been solidified in Cuba; and/or (b) creating a situation near the U.S. borders that in a political sense at least was comparable to the situation in Afghanistan, so as to gain leverage for negotiations leading to an agreement of mutual forbearance (which, of course, the Soviets would have no intention of observing).

### Initial U.S. Response

A crisis could result from the action if the Soviets had misjudged either the American political environment or the reaction of the American president to this clear step-up in military activities in the region. In the second case mentioned above, the coordinated offensive Nicaragua and left-wing insurgent groups, incidents involving losses of American lives might have the effect of so galvanizing the political atmosphere in the United States that the administration--regardless of its own proclivities--might see no alternative but to react strongly. In the first case, the introduction of offensive strategic weapons into Nicaragua, the president might well understand that he was being tested, as well as be concerned about the potential domestic political consequences of appearing to be weak when challenged internationally. For that matter, a shrewd U.S. president might see such an overt Soviet provocation as an opportunity to solidify his position domestically by taking a strong stand. Whatever the reason, for our purposes what is important is that the U.S. might well respond to such a clear escalation in Soviet activity in the Western Hemisphere far more strongly than Soviet leaders, based on previous U.S. behavior, had expected.

The U.S. response would certainly include a diplomatic *démarche* demanding withdrawal of the offending Soviet activity, a campaign of public diplomacy and actions to reassure allies. The United States would also no doubt seek to back up its demands with military action. Against the backdrop painted in this scenario, that action would have to be confrontational to gain the desired response; lesser steps, such as increases in military assistance, stepped-up patrols, establishment of new command responsibilities, and the like would be seen as intended to camouflage U.S. acceptance of the new strategic situation. A non-confrontational military response, in the context of the generally passive U.S. policy which had been postulated, would almost be interpreted as the sort of weak response which, in fact, was expected by Soviet leaders.

If the Soviet action could be tied to a specific military unit or facility, the U.S. might respond with an air strike. In the case of a U.S. patrol aircraft monitoring a Cuban/Nicaraguan/insurgent offensive being shot down by a Soviet (or Cuban) manned air defense system, a punitive strike against the airfield or missile site might be considered. In the case of the servicing of Soviet submarines or strategic aircraft in Nicaraguan facilities, strikes against the relevant airfield or naval base--not the Soviet forces themselves--might constitute a plausible first act.

Such a U.S. action would not in itself be likely to lead to a major U.S.-Soviet confrontation. Having been surprised by a strong U.S. response altogether, Soviet leaders likely would not press the issue and seek a way out of immediate confrontation (without giving up the action which had led to the crisis in the first place). At the same time, an air strike like that just described could not in itself correct the situation from the U.S. perspective.

A more ambitious U.S. military response, with both greater potential to rectify the strategic situation and greater risk of leading to confrontation, would be the establishment of a blockade or quarantine of Nicaragua. In the event of the Cuban/Nicaraguan/insurgent offensive, a quarantine would be intended to cut off logistics and coerce the Nicaraguan government into curtailing its operations. In the case of Soviet strategic deployments in Nicaragua, it would be intended to cause the cessation of further like actions and to induce a withdrawal. In establishing the quarantine, the U.S. would have calculated that, like the situation in 1962, the Soviets were too weak to challenge the U.S. directly.

An alternative U.S. response might be to mine Nicaraguan harbors and to employ electronic warfare to disrupt air traffic into that country. Such actions would be relatively easy for U.S. military forces and would have the advantage of avoiding in the first instance a direct confrontation between U.S. and Soviet forces. The U.S. would have the disadvantage, however, particularly in a mining operation, of reducing its control of leadership over the situation. Even more ambitious U.S. actions--for example, the introduction of U.S. combat forces on the ground in Central America, or an attempt to overthrow the Nicaraguan or Cuban governments, would seem implausible at this point in the scenario.

#### **Soviet Counterresponse**

Given the relative military balance in the Western Hemisphere, it seems most likely that the U.S.S.R. would back down in the face of such a concerted U.S. response. Still, Soviet leaders might not be prepared to accept a public defeat in the 1990s comparable to the one they suffered during the Cuban missile crisis. They might believe, despite its initial strong response, that the U.S. was bluffing or, at least, that the President would back down if challenged further. In fact, Soviet leaders might believe that they had gained sufficient military capabilities to stand up to the United States--even in the western hemisphere, at least to the point of accepting and inflicting some losses and thus creating a

very different global perception of the outcome of the situation than would be the case if they had simply yielded initially.

If the Soviets did choose to contest the situation further, their options would include:

- (1) *Challenging the blockade directly.* Ordering a merchant ship, probably one with plainly civilian cargoes--i.e., a tanker--to a Nicaraguan port. If the ship were stopped by the U.S. blockade force and taken into custody, the Soviets might next challenge the blockade with one of their warships. Or, conceivably, they could attack one of the American picket ships with submarines. In response to a blockade, the Soviets might send mine clearing forces, along with warships intended to prevent the laying of additional minefields. Any such action could lead to a series of naval engagements in the region and, conceivably, in other regions if the Soviets calculated that the risks of still further escalation were outweighed by the tactical military advantages to them of bringing the conflict within reach of their more capable forces in the Atlantic, Northwest Pacific, or Mediterranean.

[Cuba and perhaps even Nicaragua might be able to force the Soviet hand by attacking U.S. blockading forces on their own. Cuban submarines, for example, might attack U.S. naval forces and thereby precipitate a conflict between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Or, if they had received missile-armed patrol craft, the Nicaraguans might be able to do that on their own.]

- (2) *Seeking to outflank the blockade by supplying Nicaragua and whatever of their own forces might be in that nation by air.* Although Soviet airlift capabilities are not not likely to permit sustained resupply so far from the U.S.S.R., they might be able to keep it up long enough, and extensively enough, to avoid the perception of defeat. If successful, such an action would shift the burden of initial attack to the United States, which would have to decide whether or not to shoot down a Soviet aircraft. (The electronic warfare option would be particularly relevant here.)
- (3) *Compensating for the U.S. action politically by moving additional assets into Cuba.* Claiming that the U.S. blockade foreshadowed an attempt to overthrow the Communist Government of Cuba, the Soviets might accept the blockade of Nicaragua but seek to divert attention from their defeat by airlifting ground combat forces and possibly nuclear weapons to Cuba. Such a step would mean a strategic gain for the U.S.S.R. even if their Nicaraguan ploy had failed, as well as again shifting the burden of the initial hostile action to the United States, which would have to decide whether to attack Soviet forces on the island (or Soviet airlift aircraft) or to accept the fait accompli.

- (4) *Shifting the focus of the conflict elsewhere.* There is no reason, of course, why the U.S.S.R. would feel confined to the Western Hemisphere in its response to the crisis. A shift to Europe would be unlikely in this circumstance--as that would cement what otherwise might be serious differences over Central America between the United States and its NATO allies, as well as risking immediate escalation to a major war. More likely, particularly if the Soviets' initial objective had included gaining leverage on the Afghan situation, would be an escalation in South Asia. Such an action might include air strikes on Pakistan or even the establishment of a counterblockade. Indeed, the Soviets might very much welcome an opportunity to draw explicit parallels between Afghanistan/South Asia and Nicaragua/Central America.

### **Outcomes**

In all likelihood, this scenario would lead to sporadic and isolated incidents involving combat between U.S. and Soviet maritime forces, but not to a major war between the two great powers. Even if the U.S. continued to escalate the crisis to the point of attacking military facilities or Soviet forces deployed in Cuba, the relative military disadvantage in this hemisphere of the Soviets is so great that they would be unlikely to challenge U.S. forces directly.

The major options available to the U.S.S.R. would be (i) to strengthen their position in Cuba as both military and political compensation for their loss in Nicaragua, accepting the risk that would lead to U.S. attacks on that country or even to an invasion; and (ii) to divert the crisis to South Asia. Depending upon the political and military situation in South Asia and the American response to any hostile Soviet initiatives there, the second option could bear considerable potential for significant conflict between the military forces of the two sides. These possibilities are discussed in Appendix C.

## **2. Shorter-term Scenarios**

It is even more difficult to envision U.S.-Soviet conflict arising from events in Central America in the short term. Given U.S. actions in the region during the past five years, particularly the action in Grenada, and the administration's strong public position against the expansion of left-wing influence in the region, the discussants believed that Nicaragua, Cuba, and particularly the Soviet Union would be so cautious in responding to events in the region as to all but rule out a risk of confrontation.

One conceivable exception would originate with events in the Caribbean or Central America which so galvanized the American political system as to lead to a strong U.S.



military action in the region and a risk of confrontation. One possibility would be attacks by revolutionary organizations on U.S. facilities or personnel, or private American citizens, that involved substantial losses of American lives. Such an organization might have received assistance from Cuba or the U.S.S.R., but need not really be acting on a day-to-day basis under their control--certain elements in the Puerto Rican independence movement might be a good example of such an organization. One could imagine a variety of actions by such an organization that would outrage Americans and lead to calls for both punitive actions and steps to curb the threat of left-wing terrorism in this hemisphere. The massacre, for example, of American tourists at a resort in the Caribbean might, under some circumstances, lead to such political demands. Or, the bombing of a military facility or economic target in Puerto Rico that involved major losses of American lives might have such an effect.

Essentially, the action would have been the last straw in the growing American outrage over terrorism throughout the world and lead to a psychological and political atmosphere that demanded retaliation. How far the American administration might be willing to go in such an atmosphere is of course uncertain. If its action were restricted to a punitive air strike against a target in Nicaragua, or Cuba that was somehow connected to terrorism or military subversion, it would be unlikely to lead to military confrontation with the U.S.S.R. In such circumstances, the Soviets would likely be content to reap the propaganda benefits associated with the American attacks, while seeking to avoid any action that might lead to confrontation.

If an American administration sought to utilize the highly charged political atmosphere resulting from the provocation to go further--to overthrow the Sandinista Government overtly, for example, or to blockade the Central American coast or Cuba, seeking to interdict the movement of supplies to rebel movements in the region--there would be associated some risk of confrontation. Depending on the precise character of the American action, it could create a situation in which the U.S.S.R. would face a choice between counteraction or acceptance of a public defeat. If it chose to respond militarily, the action would probably involve some sort of isolated maritime event. An alternative would envision a Soviet response in a different region; again, South Asia might be the most logical choice.

## IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS

A number of additional scenarios also are sometimes discussed as potential sources of U.S.-Soviet confrontations which, in fact, lead essentially to dead ends; they seem to be implausible catalysts for U.S.-Soviet conflict. The more prominent include:

1. *Collapse of the Sandinistas.* Some have speculated that should the Contras appear to be nearing success, Cuban combat forces would be introduced into Nicaragua, an action which might lead to combat between U.S. and Cuban units and, perhaps, a U.S.-Soviet confrontation. The more likely consequence of an imminent Sandinista defeat, however, would be the conclusion by Fidel Castro that conditions were not yet ripe for revolutionary success in Nicaragua. As a result, any actions taken by Cuba in response to the Contras' success would most likely entail support for those Sandinista elements which chose to continue the struggle as guerrillas.
2. *Introduction of advanced offensive weaponry, such as high performance jet aircraft, into Nicaragua.* More than the specific types weapons introduced into Nicaragua would be the targets of their use. The use of advanced aircraft, for example, to attack U.S. patrol aircraft or ships off the Nicaraguan coast, could well lead to punitive air strikes against Nicaraguan air bases. Such an exchange, however, would be unlikely to lead to a U.S.-Soviet confrontation. Both the Soviets and the Cubans would likely stand aside for such actions as their political consequences--in Europe and in Latin America--could greatly benefit their popular standing.
3. *Near-term spillover of conflict on the Nicaraguan-Honduran or Nicaraguan - Costa Rican borders.* Such actions are already becoming relatively commonplace. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that such future incidents might have greater escalatory potential than those which have taken place in the past. In particular, the Nicaraguan-Honduran border region is remote and relatively isolated, and the Honduran Government in any event is buffered by conflicting forces with regard to relationships with Nicaragua and Salvador, and thus would find it difficult to act decisively. On the one hand, Honduras' political and economic interests move it toward the current friendship with El Salvador and enmity toward Nicaragua. On the other hand, antagonism between the nationals of Honduras and El Salvador is long standing and is still perceived acutely. (The two nations fought a war only ten years ago.) A more serious situation conceivably might develop on the Costa Rican border, but here too the potential for escalation would appear to be limited, if for no other reason than the military weakness of Costa Rica. The potential for escalation to a U.S.-Soviet conflict in both cases would appear to be nil.

4. *Power struggle in Cuba.* An orderly succession to Fidel Castro appears assured; his brother Raul is the designee and seems to have excellent ties to both the party and the armed forces, thus seeming to ensure little difficulty. Lacking Fidel's elan and charisma, however, it is conceivable that Raul would not be as successful in maintaining internal cohesion within Cuba and, plausibly, a struggle could develop sometime in the 1990s. If pressed, Raul might call upon Soviet forces to intervene. A decision on their part to do so, assuming it required noticeable troop movements and the like, would hinge on their assessment of likely U.S. counteractions. It seems relatively far-fetched to postulate a situation in which the U.S. and U.S.S.R. backed opposing sides of a Cuban internal struggle in such an overt way that it led to conflict between them.

## **PATHWAYS TO U.S.-SOVIET CONFLICT**

There thus would appear to be two potential pathways to U.S.-Soviet conflict in Central America. Both originate in a deteriorating political/military situation in the region. In the short term, a terrorist incident with clear links to Soviet or Cuban support which resulted in considerable American casualties might lead to American actions against Cuba that had the potential to induce a Soviet counter-response that would lead to combat. This appears an unlikely contingency, but plausible. Over the longer term, Soviet/Cuban actions which challenged existing "understandings" of permissible and impermissible forms of military activity in the region could induce an American response that in turn triggered a Soviet counterresponse and combat between the forces of the two sides. In neither case would the situation be expected to escalate beyond isolated incidents.

Pathways to U.S.-Soviet conflict in Central America are summarized in Figure J-1 below.

## **LINKS TO OTHER REGIONS**

There are no direct links between U.S.- Soviet conflict in Central America and other regions. In view of its considerable military inferiority in the Western Hemisphere, however, it is quite plausible that the Soviet Union would respond to what it perceived as an American provocation in Central America with an action of its own elsewhere. In geopolitical terms, South Asia might be the most likely arena for such a horizontal escalation.

The situation in South Korea might also provide such an opportunity, but here broader questions of Soviet relations with China and Japan might constrain Soviet options. Horizontal escalation to Europe, once considered the likely response to a U.S. attack on

Cuba, now appears unlikely in view of the central Soviet interest in promoting peaceful relations with Western Europe and the great risks which would accompany any crisis in Europe.

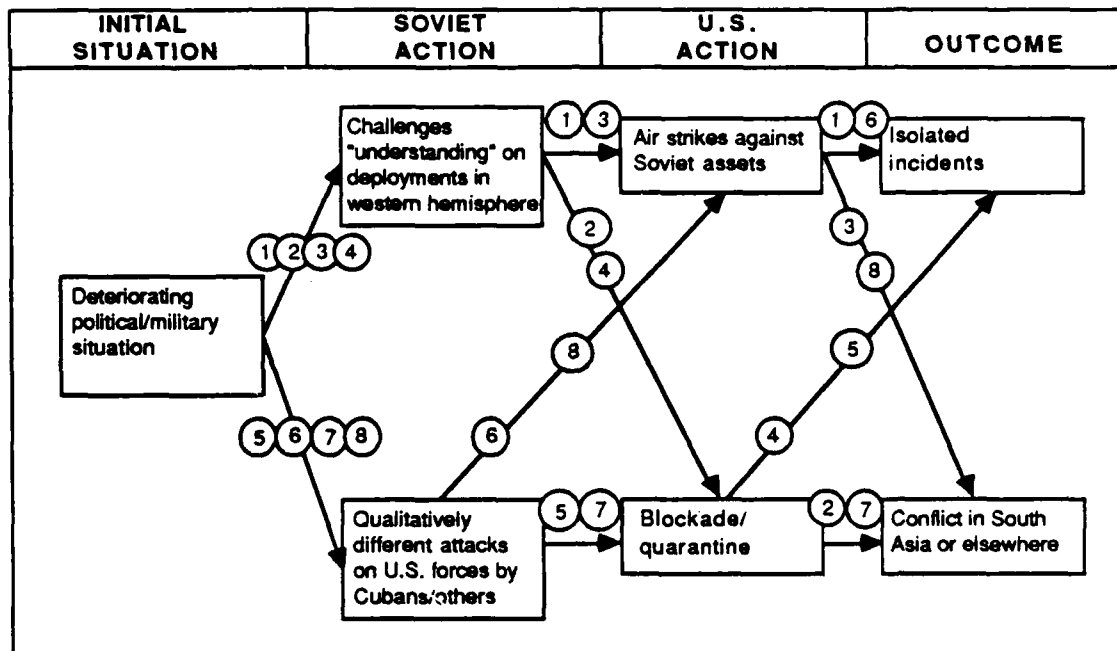


Figure J-1. Pathways to U.S.-Soviet Conflict, Central America

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